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VIEWS OF THE

SONSHIP OF CHRIST,

THE COMFORTER, AND TRINITY.

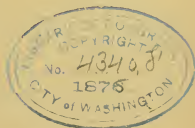
WITH AN APPENDIX

ON THE

ATONEMENT.

By A. WILBUR.

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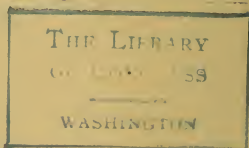
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PREFACE.



THE sentiments presented to the Christian public in the following little work are not the result of hastily or recently adopted conclusions. For more than forty years they have existed as settled convictions in the author's mind.

They have been a solace and satisfaction to him in no ordinary sense.

They have been a triumphant support under all the vicissitudes of a protracted life; not, indeed, to the exclusion or disparagement in any wise of any one of the great vital Scriptural truths essential to true discipleship and practical godliness: indeed, he maintains that these fundamental doctrines themselves are more clearly seen, and their simplicity and consistency better understood and more truly appreciated, from the point of view set forth in the following pages, than from the usual exposition of them.

It has seemed to the writer well-nigh unaccountable that certain plain teachings of the New Testament, as they appear to him, especially many from the lips of Christ himself, should be misapplied, and conclusions adopted instead which are unnatural, and confessedly shrouded in impenetrable mystery.

Should the question be asked, Why have not these sentiments, these long-cherished convictions, been sooner made public? The reply is, An extreme reluctance at the thought of advancing doctrines the writer knew would not be fully in accord with those of his brethren, with whom he has so long and so happily labored to advance the kingdom of their common Redeemer. He shrunk from exciting their apprehensions and suspicions, which he well knew would be the natural result. These, with some minor considerations, have hitherto prevented his views from being publicly known. It would not be strange if misconceptions of the course of thought, or, indeed, a full sense of the author's meaning, should excite opposition. He is aware of the position he has taken; but an assured sense of fidelity to the simple teachings of the Saviour of men abundantly sustains him as he ventures out of his usual pur-

suit in life, and commits himself to his Master and the public.

He is conscious that what is brought forward in the following treatise is but an outline of what might and what ought to be said on the subjects treated.

That the "Spirit of truth," the Comforter, whose prerogative it is to "guide into all truth," may enlighten and conduct the reader as he contemplates these important subjects, is the prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

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THE
SONSHIP OF CHRIST,
THE COMFORTER, AND THE TRINITY.



CHAPTER I.
STATEMENT OF VIEWS.

BEFORE any creation, there existed from eternity the One almighty, self-existent, omniscient Deity.

At a period in the existence of this eternal God, before any other creative act known to us, he brought forth, or begot, a being of the nature, powers, and senses, such as he afterwards breathed into the body of Adam when he became a "living soul." In other words, he begot a perfect human soul.

Thus there were in existence before the creation of the world two beings, — one the self-existent God, the other the begotten being ; or, as we will now call them, Father and Son. Each has his own will : these wills being not at variance, but in perfect harmony ; for, in the nature of things, a holy being could not beget an unholy.

Before this period, God existed as God ; not as Father, because there was *no Son*. The begotten being was Son — “ the only-begotten Son.”

The next act of the eternal God was to take this begotten being into perfect *union with himself* ; in other words, he incorporated this human soul into his own being, so that the two beings, with their distinct natures and wills, became by this union one. Separately they were two, but by this union One. A being thus constituted must necessarily have the nature, faculties, and powers belonging to each before their union. Thus there was in heaven, before the creation, a complex being, divine and human, — divine, because one of his component parts is the eternal God ; human, because the other part is the begotten human soul or Son.

The nature or manner of this union we do not attempt to explain ; but its reality is conceivable, and no more mysterious than our own constitution. We are composed of spirit and matter, each as really unlike the other as deity and humanity ; and yet these two, matter and spirit, are so united as to constitute one person, yet acting in perfect harmony, each retaining its distinctive properties. But the manner or nature of this union is inexplicable. Now, as we can conceive of, but cannot explain, this union in our own constitution, even so we may conceive of, but cannot explain, the union of deity and humanity. The fact of the union is as reasonable and admissible in the one case as in the other.

We are now prepared to look at the account of the creation ; and we must not lose sight of the character of the being who is the Creator. It is this complex being, — Father and Son, divine and human, i. e., human soul. The begotten Son, of himself, had no more power to create than Christ, as a mere man on earth, had power to do God's works : according to his own declaration, "The Son can do nothing of himself" (John v. 19). But, being one with the Almighty, by and with His power he could create. Hence the harmony of the two following passages : "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "By him [Christ] were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth" (Gen. i. 1 ; Col. i. 16). It was proper, therefore, to say God created and the Son created ; because they were united as one in the work of creation, the Father operating with and in the Son, and the Son by and through the power of the Father.

On this principle Jesus when on earth performed his miracles. He said to the leprous man, "I will ; be thou clean." There is no more mystery in this case than in that of the creation. All will see that it as really required divine power to heal the leper as to produce the light, or gather the waters together ; yet it is properly said that Christ healed the leper, though in reality God the Father performed the cure through his Son, according to the words of Jesus, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

After the material world was created, and the grand crowning work of the creation was to be accomplished, we hear for the first time a communication between the two wills, or two beings, Father and Son, in heaven. It runs thus: "Let *us* make *man* in *our* image, after *our* likeness;" that is, as we understand it, "Let us make a being of the same nature, faculties, and senses, and of the same purity and holiness, as the begotten being which forms a part of Ourselves." The being that was to inhabit the earthly body was to be in all respects "in the image and likeness" of the complex Creator, Father and Son. And what a perfect image of the Creator was man when he came from the hands of his Maker, in whom two natures are mysteriously united, so that one does not act without the other, the superior nature leading.

First, a tenement formed from the earth was prepared, adapted to the being who should inhabit it, in which he might develop and exercise himself in his appointed sphere. Into this tenement God then breathed the breath of life, and man became a living soul; not, however, another begotten Son united to the Father; for God, in company with the pre-existing Son, created this human soul in the likeness of the one united to himself. It matters not which word is used — "breathed," "created," or "said:" the work was the act of this complex being. All must see that the "breathing" needed an accompanying divine power; for not only was a soul imparted, but animal life was given,

and the earthly body made complete with its almost innumerable functions and powers.

Thus man was formed and placed on earth by the same power and the same beings (for the word "us" is used by them) that formed whatever else was created.

Hence there was placed on earth a being fitly emblematical of his Creator ; the spirit of the man corresponding to the deity of the Creator, the body corresponding to the begotten human soul, and the two natures in each case so united as to make one. In speaking of them, we call the Being in heaven "God," "Lord God," "God of Jacob," "God of Israel," and so on, each name including both natures acting together. The being on earth we call "man," the term also including the two natures of which he is composed acting together ; and, as the spirit of man never communicates except through the organs of the body, the inferior part acting with it, so the eternal Deity communicates with man only by and through the begotten human Son, the inferior part united with him.

In this arrangement we see wisely established, before man was placed on earth, a channel or medium of communication between God in heaven and man on earth ; a being of the same species and nature as the human race, whose natural sympathies would be with his brother on earth, and so united to the eternal God that the divine sympathies, also, through him, could flow to man even in his fallen state. Apart from such union, it is

difficult to see how God could have shown more sympathy towards rebellious man than towards rebellious angels.

With this agree the words of the Lamb of God : " I am the way ; " and, " No man cometh unto the Father but by me " (John xiv. 6). In this manner did this complex Being act, and communicate with man during the ages of the Old Testament.

After the lapse of about four thousand years from the creation of Adam, this begotten being, human soul, or Son, — by whichever term expressed, — who had dwelt " in the bosom of the Father," in happy union with him, from before the foundation of the world, and " by whom God created all things," left his celestial abode, and came down to earth ; where by the divine energy, through the Virgin Mary, a body was prepared for him. In this body, according to its capacity, he developed his knowledge and wisdom. In leaving heaven, however, the Son did not cease to be united with his Father ; nor was this union less perfect on earth than it had been in heaven.

But, " though he was rich, he became poor : " that is, he was divested of the glory and majesty which he had with his Father in heaven. This divesting was necessary, that he might appear as a servant, become familiar with his brother man in his fallen state, dwell with him as one of them, and " be tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

And now we have before us Christ as he was in

Palestine, — truly God and truly man. Being, as to his soul, the “beginning of the creation of God,” and as to his body, being “begotten of the Holy Ghost,” he is in a twofold sense “the Son of God.” Born of a woman as other men, he was placed by birth “under the law,” and was naturally “the Son of man.” And since, as before stated, he is so united to God that he and his Father are One, we have God and man, divinity and humanity, complete in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus we see the divinity of the eternal God is the divinity of the Son.

Are the above views of the origin of the divinity and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with the word of God? are they taught in that sacred volume? If so, they are true, and must ultimately prevail, all conflicting theories on the subject, ancient or modern, to the contrary notwithstanding.

It is not at all improbable that many, on reading thus far, will cast this little treatise aside, denouncing it as heretical, and unworthy of further attention. They have been taught, and believe, that the divinity of Christ, his sonship, &c., are a mystery, utterly incomprehensible by human reason. Multitudes of Christ’s children, learned and unlearned, past and present, have stilled their inquiries with this conclusion.

Would it not be well that the Christian reader should carefully examine the subject before pro-

nouncing judgment? The Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so;" and all know the beneficial result.

Before proceeding to an examination of the Scriptures, let us quote the language of one of our theological professors, whose sentiments we most heartily adopt.

"Our fundamental principle is, that the Scriptures alone are our guide in all matters of faith and practice. To this principle we should unhesitatingly conform, whatever may be the result. We should not shrink from its application, even if it should overturn customs which have been most venerated by us, and should lead us to act contrary to all the teachings of our fathers." — Bib. Sacra, p. 29, vol. 30.

On just this "fundamental principle" we have endeavored to study the Scriptures; and it has constrained us to adopt the doctrines herein presented. If the reader will adhere to this principle in examining these subjects, he can hardly judge amiss.

Once more: in the examination of Scripture now to be made, the following rule of interpretation may, also, well be recommended.

"We should never have recurrence to a strained or metaphysical sense, but when we know, that, either from the nature of the thing, or from some other revelation of Scripture, it will not admit of a proper one. We must understand words in their proper and natural sense, when there is no apparent reason for a figure."

CHAPTER II.

PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST.

WE now take up the sacred volume, confidently believing that the writers thereof wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit ; and we will look to the same Guide to direct us in our examinations.

That Christ, as the Son of God, did exist before his incarnation, is admitted by all or nearly all evangelical Christians. One would suppose that the assertion of Christ, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 50), would be decisive, and convince the most scrupulous of the fact. He evidently intended to convey the idea that he existed before the days of Abraham. He was so understood. If he thus intended, and did not so exist, he was either a lunatic or guilty of falsehood ; and the Jews were right in rejecting him. But we "believe and are sure that he was the Christ, the son of the living God," and that he did exist before Abraham.

Again he says (John xvii. 5), "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was.*" Here Jesus appeals to the Almighty God as to the truth that he was with Him before the creation. Paul taught the same to several of the churches. To

the Colossians he says (chap. i. 17), "He was before all things," &c. On this point we need not quote further, as it is not generally disputed by evangelical believers.



CHAPTER III.

THE WORD, OR LOGOS, NOT ETERNAL.

SEC. I. — *Examination of John i. 2.*

HAVING treated of the Pre-existence of Christ, the question now is, In what character did he exist? The usual answer is, As the divine, eternal Son of God; or perhaps as the second person in the divine Trinity.

In answering this question, our first point will be to show that the Scriptures chiefly relied on as proof of the eternal existence of the Word do not sustain that doctrine; but that many of them, as well as others, fully show that his existence as Son had a *beginning*.

But, before proceeding further, let us ask ourselves, Can we lay aside preconceived views in examining this subject, and take the sacred volume as addressed to us personally, from our heavenly Father, for the purpose of teaching us his will and the principles of his kingdom? Only in this spirit can we hope to succeed in our inquiries after truth.

We can be sure of getting correct information only when willing to surrender, if needful, any previously formed doctrinal opinions. No person finds Christ to be a Saviour to himself personally, until he makes a complete surrender of all things else. Even so in learning "the things of Christ." However wise, we must become "fools" as to our wisdom, for Christ's sake. We must accept the inspired word as a child would take a lesson from his father; and seek the enlightening aid of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who, the Saviour promised, should "guide us into all truth."

As the venerable John Brown of Haddington said, on completing his Family Bible, "I have learned more of the true meaning of the Bible on my knees before God, than from all the commentaries I ever consulted."

Bearing in mind the rules of interpretation which have been laid down, it may be shown that the commonly received doctrine of an eternal divine Sonship has no sanction in the Bible. It is of human origin; and the Son, as before said, must be a distinct, derived being.

The first eighteen verses of John's Gospel are much relied on to prove the eternity of the Word, or Son, particularly the first two, commencing thus: "In the beginning was the Word," &c. Considerable labor has been expended to show that this beginning refers to the commencement of all God's operations; or that if it refers to the creation, then all before that period must be eternal; and that as

the Word was with God at that period, he must have been with Him from eternity.

That God had performed acts before he created this world very few doubt. One act only has been revealed, namely, the producing or begetting of him who sent the messages to the Seven Churches of Asia. He tells us "*he* was the beginning of the creation of God." Is it not like beating the air to refer to a beginning of which there is no revelation, and of which there can be no conception? A "beginning in eternity," or belonging to eternity, — where is it?

It is observable that John begins his history of Christ with the same words with which Moses commenced his account of the creation of the world: "in *the beginning* God created the heavens and the earth." Has this word a different meaning when used by John than when used by Moses? What do we know of anything begun, before the commencement of the creation of the world, with the single exception as above?

Placing these two narratives side by side, do they not teach that there was a period in God's existence when he commenced the creation of the world, and that the Word, or Son, was with him at that period? Do they teach anything beyond that period?

John does not say the Word was, or was not eternal. All he affirms is, that the Word was with God at a certain period. One may infer the Word had been eternally with Him, another that he was

with Him only just before the commencement of the creation; both are inferences, but neither proof.

But, says one, "John's testimony was, 'He was God;' and that of itself proves he was eternal." The Son is called God in several instances, and he was truly God—to which point reference will be had hereafter, under another head. It will be seen that Moses' and John's narratives harmonize in recognizing a duality of persons present on the occasion spoken of. Moses says, as has been noted, "And God said, Let *us* make man," showing that there were two, at least, employed in the formation of man. It is noticeable that the Hebrew word, here translated "God," is plural, while the verb is in the singular. Does not this indicate that there were two in the agency, while the act was one? This idea is abundantly supported by other Scriptures. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." John supports the same idea when he says, "And the Word was with God," showing there were two; otherwise it could not properly be said that one was *with* another.

We see, then, that this passage, so much relied on in the hands of those who believe in the eternity of the Son, proves nothing more than that the Son existed, and was with God at the beginning of creation. This accords with the view expressed on page II.

The idea that all before the "beginning" of

which John speaks must be eternal, has so long prevailed in the evangelical Church, that if one should inquire of a theologian whether there is Scripture evidence of the eternity of the Son of God, he would with much assurance refer to the first two verses of John's Gospel as settling the question. Should the authority of such a rendering be disputed, he would call to his support the great body of writers of the evangelical Church on the subject, from the early fathers down to the present day.

Commentators generally, following each other's sentiments, if not words, in their expositions on these verses, become so fixed in the belief that this passage supports the doctrine in question, that they unhesitatingly assert it as a fact. We will quote some modern writers in confirmation of this statement.

Dr. John Gill, a learned English commentator, says of the second verse, "This is a repetition of what is before said, and is made to show the *eternity* of Christ; and so *proves* not only the *eternal* existence, but his *eternal* existence with his Father, and also his eternal deity." Does the text warrant such a statement?

Matthew Henry says, in his remarks on this Scripture (and we would say that no writer we have known appears so much at home in the Bible as he), "The beginning of time, in which all creatures were produced and brought into being, found this *eternal* Word in being." Note, it is

Mr. Henry, and not the apostle, who calls the Word eternal. He adds, "He that was in the beginning never began." Mark this logic. Was there not a period in God's existence when he began to create the world? Did not God exist before he began this or any other creation? Could not the Word have been begotten at some period prior to the commencement of the creation? If Mr. Henry means any other beginning than the creation of our world, we cannot follow him, for we know of no other beginning except the Son himself, who tells us he was "the beginning of creation" (Rev. iii. 14).

Mr. Henry again says, on verse 2, "The same, the very same that we believe in and preach, was in the beginning with God: that is, he was *from eternity*."

So says Mr. Henry; but is it in the text? Again: "The history of man's redemption . . . was hid in God before *all worlds*;" and he quotes Eph. iii. 9. The common translation reads thus: "The mystery which from the beginning of the *world* [not 'all worlds'] hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Another translation which we have consulted reads, "from ages has been hidden," &c. Query: What ages before the world was created?

Dr. Thomas Scott, in his commentary on this passage, speaks thus: "Nothing could exceed time but an immeasurable, incomprehensible *eternity*. Time began when the creation was called forth into

existence by the Word himself: and in the beginning the Word was; that is, from *all eternity*." Note, it is Dr. Scott who says "from all eternity."

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his comments, says, "What was before creation *must be eternal*: therefore Jesus, who was 'before all things,' and who made all things, must necessarily be the *eternal* God" (the Italicizing is ours).

These writers are selected because so well known and highly esteemed for piety and biblical knowledge.

Now, who would suppose that men so pious, devotional, and biblically learned could have drawn such deductions from these two verses, asserting them as facts, even misquoting Scripture to support a preconceived doctrine? But so it is; and no doubt they thought they were rendering service to the kingdom of Christ. Let the reader turn to these two verses, and see if there is a word or hint concerning an eternity in them.

It will be seen, the supposed proof for the eternity of the Son, drawn from the passage cited, rests on the assumption that whatever existed prior to the creation must be eternal. This is the only fair deduction we can make from these declarations. Now, does the narrative of Moses or of John express or imply such an idea? Was not Moses speaking simply of the creation of our world? Does any one who reads his history imagine he had any thought of what might have

been previously created. His object was to record the facts of the creation of the material world; saying nothing, hinting nothing, concerning the origin of the Son of God; that was left for inspired writers of later days. Likewise with reference to the "beginning" of which John speaks: would any reader naturally, without prepossession, suppose anything intended by his word "beginning," other than that of which Moses had written? A man can draw such inferences as he chooses; but to assert an inference as a fact, and then deduce proof from it, is a course of reasoning we are unable to follow.

Let us now read the remainder of the verse: "and the Word was God." It will be remembered that in the second paragraph of the Statement of Views on page 12 the position is taken that God united the begotten Son to himself in such a way that the two became one. Assume, for the present, the correctness of this position with regard to the Father and the Logos or Son. The reality of this union will be considered hereafter.

If, then, the Logos or Word be a derived being, and if the Father took him into union with himself, it would be in accordance with John's use of language to call him God, on the ground of this union. In the fourteenth verse of this chapter John says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." No one from this statement supposes John to mean that the Word, who "was with God, and was God," was transformed into

human flesh. All understand that "he was made flesh" by being united to flesh, so that he and flesh became one by such union. Was it more singular for John to say that the begotten Son, united to God his Father, was God, than that he should say he became flesh because he was united to flesh? But John adds, "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."

What was this glory? And to what does John refer when he says, "as of the only-begotten of the Father"? Is the reference to the physical body of Christ? True, that body was begotten of God; but what glory was there of his mere body, more than of the body of another man? Was it not the glory of the Father manifesting himself through the man Jesus, soul and body, that the apostles saw? And this is according to Christ's words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). No one had seen the Father in any way but by his works which he had wrought in and by his Son. John uses similar language in his first Epistle, i. 1, 2: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)."

It is evident that John had never seen, heard,

or handled anything of Christ except his human body, which of itself was merely flesh, blood, and bones ; and yet he says that he had seen, &c., the "Word of life," and "the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

Here, then, we see his familiar manner of expression. What he had seen, heard, and handled could refer to one part only of Christ — his body ; and in this he is not misunderstood. Nearly all agree that that body which the apostle saw and handled was so united to the soul, and this soul and body were so united to God, that all three by this union became one person. We have thus three distinct natures joined in one person ; and, consequently, language applicable to any one of the three natures may include the whole person, — body, soul, and God.

If, then, the derived Son was united to God as body is to soul, would it be more improper or unnatural for John to say that the "Word was God," than for him to say that "we have seen, handled, &c., the Word of life" ? Truly, the Word or Son was *with* God, and was God ; and the term "Christ," as we understand it, includes all the three natures united in one.

In what respect does the language and meaning of John differ from ours ? We say "the Word was God," in precisely the same manner in which John said he "was God," and "was made flesh : " i. e., by union with each. If we could once get these

ideas clearly into our minds, together with the fact that he and the Father were one *in the only possible way in which deity and humanity can be one* (that is, by union), then the first eighteen verses of John's Gospel, and the first two verses of his Epistle, would appear clear, natural, and rational. John seems to have had a much clearer knowledge of the origin, nature, and character of Christ, and the object of his errand into our world, than either of the other evangelists, or even Paul, who was so well instructed in the things of God's kingdom; and he might well have this superiority, after his most sublime interview with Christ, and the revelation which he received from him in the desolate island.

The Adversary thought that he had shut John out of the world, and put him quite beyond the power of further usefulness to the cause of truth, when he had him banished to that lonely island: but, as always in his onsets on Christ's kingdom, his work recoiled with double force on his own head; for in what spot on the face of the earth could this apostle have been placed, where, all things considered, he would have been so useful to the cause of Christ?

Let the reader now judge whether there is any evidence of the eternity of the Son in these first verses of John's Gospel. Writers have, indeed, as already said, adduced them as conclusive proof of this doctrine. We think, however, when other passages shall have been considered, in another place,

it will yet more plainly appear that such a view is wholly untenable.

It is evident that John's whole object, in these first eighteen verses, is to explain the character of Christ ; and in the fourteenth and eighteenth verses he makes the " Word " of the first verse " the only-begotten Son."

SEC. II.— *Proverbs* viii. 22-30.

We next invite attention to Prov. viii. 22-30. As these verses are much to the point, and are often referred to as proving the eternal existence of the Son, we quote them entire.

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth ; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth : while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there : when he set a compass upon the face of the depth : when he established the clouds above : when he strengthened the fountains of the deep : when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment : when he appointed the foundations of the earth : then I was by him, as one brought up with him : and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

The person here represented as speaking is wisdom personified : but the language is generally, and doubtless correctly, referred to the Messiah. In this view, the passage is often regarded as proof of his existence as Son from eternity. The principal argument for that view is drawn from the use of the word "everlasting" in the clause, "I was set up from everlasting." We are told that the word thus translated means "eternal," or "eternity," and that the corresponding Greek word in the New Testament has the same signification. Well, admit this : they are mostly so translated in the common version of both the Old and New Testaments, especially in the marginal readings.

But it is well known that words often have meanings corresponding to the beings or objects to which they are applied. When this word refers to God, or any of his attributes, or to the future life, it undoubtedly means eternal. In such cases, no limit or qualification is either expressed or implied.

But, when it relates to hills (as in Gen. xlix. 26), or to the Levitical priesthood (as in Ex. xl. 15), or to mountains (as in Hab. iii. 6), it cannot mean eternal, but simply as long as the thing in question lasts.

The verse last referred to ends thus : "His ways are everlasting." Here, its application being to God, the word denotes "eternal." Thus in this one verse the word has two significations : "eter-

nal," as applied to Deity ; and a limitation of existence, as applied to mountains.

But let us look a little more closely at the passage in Proverbs. "The Lord [Jehovah] possessed me in the beginning of his way." Does not this suggest the idea of two beings, — a superior and an inferior, one "possessing" the other ? Does it not imply that the Father possessed the Son ? But it is asserted that the Father and the Son are not only equal, but innately "the same in essence ;" if so, would it not be just as proper to say that the Son possessed the Father, as that the Father possessed the Son ?

The expression, "in the beginning of his way," like the similar language of Moses and John in the commencement of their narratives, evidently refers to the work of creation. What way of God before the creation did Solomon know of ? and it is worthy of note, that, more than a thousand years before John wrote, Solomon uses the same phraseology in reference to the same period, and also to the same person, — the Son of God. It was the period before the creation of the world ; and it seems clear that he meant to say, "Jehovah possessed me before the world was created." And there is no reasonable doubt that this is John's meaning in his gospel. But Solomon shows what "way" he means in the following verse : "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, *or ever the earth was.*"

Here the word "everlasting" is explained, and

its meaning fixed as referring to a period before the creation. To prevent any misunderstanding, it is added, "or ever the earth was." The twenty-third verse is nearly a repetition of the twenty-second, as to the time when the Father possessed the Son: it only adds, "I was set up," to show that his being had a commencement. Is it asked, "When?" The answer is, "Or ever the earth was;" i. e., before the creation of the world.

Can any one read these two verses, and reasonably draw from them any other than the above conclusion? The following verses seem to be confirmatory: verse 24, "When there were no depths, I was *brought forth*;" verse 25, "Before the mountains, before the hills was I brought forth." If this "I" referred to an eternal, divine Son, could such expressions as "I was set up," "I was brought forth," "Before the hills was I brought forth," be applicable to him? What consistency would there be in the application of such expressions by Deity to Deity, — "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way," "Before the hills was I brought forth," "I was set up"? All will at once see their inappropriateness.

The remaining verses in the quotation from Proverbs are mostly confirmatory repetitions of those on which we have commented. They refer to the *period* when the Son existed with the Father. This period is marked quite emphatically in the thirtieth verse, "*Then* I was by him, as one brought

up with him : and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

This word "*then*" points unmistakably to the period before described as "in the beginning of his way," "before his works of old," "from everlasting" (as that word is qualified), "from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (that is, before the creation, of which a sketch is given) ; and the whole text depicts a dutiful Son in intercourse with a loving Father, and harmonizes with all Christ's language in relation to his Father.

Take, now, these nine verses together, and what do they affirm ? Is it not this : that the person described as speaking "was set up," "brought forth," or began his existence, before the heavens and the earth were created ?

He "was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him ;" i. e., as we understand it, happy in his presence.

It seems as if the Son of God here takes special pains to prevent misunderstanding as to his existence and character. As was remarked on the passages from John's Gospel, let the reader clearly apprehend the ideas which have been advanced, whether accepting them or not, and he will see how naturally the whole passage reads. There is but one word, "everlasting," that seems to favor the idea of existence from eternity ; and that word may properly be taken in its limited sense. Yet our ablest theological writers are wont to adduce this passage as proving the eternity of the Son. It is

difficult to account for this only on the power of preconceived opinion.

Let us suppose that the Son was a derived being, united to the Father, and attempted to convey to Solomon an idea of his origin and state before the creation: should we not expect him to say just what Solomon here wrote? His union with the Father is not, indeed, so positively expressed as after his descent to earth; yet the language is adapted to the purpose. Thus viewed, the passage makes good sense; but does it so appear on the other scheme? Can we conceive of God as thus "possessed," "set up," "brought forth," the delight of Jehovah, and "rejoicing always before him"?

Evidently, this must be another being, and in himself alone less than God.

SEC. III.—*Examination of Micah v. 2.*

The second verse of Micah (Vth) is also held to indubitably teach the eternity of the Son. The first part of this verse refers exclusively to the advent of the Messiah, even fixing the place of his nativity. The verse closes thus: "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." The Hebrew word here translated "from everlasting," in the margin reads "the days of eternity." It has been shown that the word everlasting does not always mean eternal. In Amos ix. 11 it will be seen the same Hebrew word above translated "everlasting," and "days of eternity," is trans-

lated "days of old," which cannot refer to eternity.

On first reading these two last lines of the verse in Micah, with the mind fully fixed in the doctrine of the eternity of the Son, and influenced by the marginal reading, this passage would seem to be a confirmation of that view. In the translation of any language there are words which the translator can determine the meaning of only by the context. So with this passage: on close examination, the idea of eternity entirely disappears, as it does in all the passages held to support the eternity of the Son.

The "everlasting," here — and with it the marginal reading — stands synonymous with his "goings forth have been from of old;" ("have been" being inserted.) What goings forth of the Messiah, before the creation of the world, could the prophet, or any one else, have in mind? Of the Messiah the first we hear is his being begotten. We hear his Father say, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Ps. ii. 7). Agreeably to this he tells us he is the first of God's creation. The first we hear of his goings forth, or his doings, is, he is with his Father in the creation. If Micah had said, "Who was from of old, even from everlasting, or from eternity," there would be reason in presenting this passage as proving the eternity of the Son; but this is not the text. As therefore the expression "goings forth" necessarily implies action, and we have no account of any action of the Son prior to the creation, the "everlasting"

here comes into the position which the same word holds in Prov. viii. 23, and Amos ix. 11. The simple meaning of the prophet evidently is, "His goings forth are from of old," or "among the ancients." The expression "of old" is a familiar one in the Old Testament, occurring over forty times; and in all but two or three it unmistakably refers to ancient times, persons, or things.

Again, if the prophet intended "eternity" by the word rendered "everlasting," why does he insert "days"? This word, though not in the English, is in the original.

It is believed this is the only place in the Bible where the word days is made to apply to eternity. The original translators evidently saw a difficulty of giving the exact sense here, as in Amos ix. 11. It would be a repetition of "goings forth of old;" hence they used a term that might mean "of old," or "eternal," should the context in the original so require.

Further, the marginal reading "days of eternity" cannot be correct, since it conflicts with many other passages, such as, "Thou art my Son, *this day have I begotten thee*;" "The *beginning* of the creation of God;" "The *First-born* of every creature;" &c.

SEC. IV.—*Examination of Hebrews i. 8.*

We will glance at one more passage often confidently urged as evidence of the eternity of the Son, and then leave this side of the question.

Heb. i. 8: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." In this chapter, the writer shows the Christian Jews the superiority of the Son of God above all other created beings. To do this he quotes from several psalms the declarations of the Father to or concerning the Son, all spoken many years before the incarnation; some of them were addressed to him even before the creation. In every one of these quotations, either in this chapter, or in the psalm from which it is taken, carefully studied with its context, the Son, as such, appears in a subordinate character to his Father. We could go into an analysis of them, if needed. At present we will only notice the one above, "Thy throne, O God," &c.

This verse, standing by itself, may indeed seem to be decisive. The Father addresses the Son as "God." "Surely," says one, "if the Son is God, he must be in himself God." Read, however, the verse following: there it is declared that the Father anointed this Son, whom he calls God, "above his fellows." Observe, *above his fellows*, that is, his equals. And who could have been his equals, were he an eternal Son?

This expression "anointing," without question, was in accordance with the ceremony, in the Mosaic economy, of inducting the high-priest, and sometimes kings and prophets, into office by anointing them with the holy oil.

When thus anointed, they were consecrated,

and authorized to act in their respective offices ; and when utensils or other things were thus anointed, they were set apart exclusively to holy purposes.

Note, it is God's *holy oil* with which the Son is said to have been anointed. For the preparation of that oil, and the care with which it was guarded from being used for any common purpose, or imitated, the reader is referred to Ex. xxx. 23-33 inclusive. Does not this anointing most fitly emblemize the anointing of the Son ? When God took him into union with himself, did he not thus anoint him with his own spirit "without measure" ? And was he not thus "filled with all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" ? And being thus spiritually anointed, he is properly inducted into the spiritual offices of priest, prophet, and king. And possessing all that the Father had, which of course included all the divine attributes and powers, was it not as proper that his Father should call him God as that John, under the influence of the divine Spirit, should call him God ? Yes, he was God, not inherently, but by union ; and it was right that his Father should so call him, and that John and Thomas should call him God ; and it would be right, and it is the duty of all the inhabitants of the earth, to so call him, and to worship him, "as over all, God blessed forever."

Other passages often adduced as proving the eternal existence of Christ as Son, if closely examined according to the rules of interpretation

referred to in the beginning of this volume, will be found to prove only that Christ as Son existed before the creation.

The so-called Scriptural idea of the Son's eternal existence, or an eternal second person in the God-head, we are compelled to regard as wholly unsustained. We do not find a single passage which, when candidly examined, supports it. If, now, it can be plainly shown that the Son's existence had a beginning, this would seem to settle the question.



CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST IN HEAVEN AS HUMAN BEFORE THE CREATION.

SEC. I. — *Use of Pronouns "I," "My," "Me," &c.*

THE consideration, then, to which attention is now invited, is that Christ existed as a *human being* before the creation of the world.

In doing this we must examine his use of the pronouns "I" and "me," and other words by which he describes himself. In his general appearance we suppose him to have been like other men. He was of the Hebrew nation, and of the tribe of Judah. He could trace his genealogy like other Jews. He had a legal father, a natural mother, brothers, and sisters, as others had. He was born of a woman,

was a babe, nourished, and brought up as others ; was a boy, a lad, a young man, learned a trade, worked at it for a living, and became a man like other men, except that in all these stages of life he was perfect and holy.

If asked how we know that he was perfect and holy, the answer is : Had he not been so, if on any occasion he had deviated from perfect rectitude before God, the almighty Father could not have said to him when he was about thirty years old, " This is my beloved Son in whom I am *well pleased* ; " nor could he have been fitted to make an acceptable atonement for man's sin.

Our information of his early life is very meagre. When twelve years old, he conversed with the rabbis and doctors in the temple on the great principles of God's kingdom, and astonished them by his answers ; and " he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

We learn nothing further of him until he was about thirty years of age, when he came down some sixty or seventy miles to his relative John, the forerunner, to be baptized by him.

As to what occurred with him during the intervening eighteen years, we are left to conjecture ; but we have no reason to suppose that in that interim he manifested any divine power, or claimed any divine authority.

The nearest approach to this is his answer to his mother, when he was found in the temple : " Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's

business?" Here he evidently claims God as his Father.

Thus, up to his baptism, he stood before the community as any other man who was strictly moral and devout; and after this the only difference was that he devoted himself wholly to the spiritual and temporal good of the people, in his wonderful teachings and miracles which, through the power of the Father, he performed; for he says, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John xiv. 10). It is not a divine Son, but the Father, whom he speaks of as *dwelling in him*.

Therefore, in all his intercourse with the people, he was wont to use the pronouns referring to himself as men commonly use them, and evidently was so understood. He made no reference to his connection with God except when he specially wished to bring this connection into view; as in the words, "I and my Father are one."

No one supposes that he prayed as a divine Son; yet the pronouns that he applies to himself in his prayers are used precisely as on other ordinary occasions. Thus he says, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. . . . O Father, glorify thou me" (John xvii. 4, 5). The pronouns "I" and "me" are here used in just the same sense as in the passages, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John iv. 32), and, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?"

In almost innumerable instances Jesus uses the

pronoun "I" when referring merely to his humanity ; yet, as before observed, he sometimes includes in it his divinity, as when he says, "I have power to lay it [life] down ; and I have power to take it again." He must here mean his human life ; and the "I" includes his divinity ; for as man he had no more power to take back his life than any other man ; and Paul says, "God raised him from the dead" (Acts xiii. 30).

All the writers of the New Testament, when treating of Christ in his ordinary intercourse with men, speak of him as a man ; but when divinity was manifested in him, their language was generally different.

In many incidents of his life we see no signs of divinity, while in others we see little else than divinity. This all harmonizes perfectly when we remember that divinity and humanity are one in him.

But let us proceed to the more direct proofs of the position that Christ existed as a human being before the creation.

This once admitted as a settled fact drawn from the Scriptures, the way is clear for the consideration of the other positions which have been advanced.

SEC. II. — *The Terms "Set up," &c., signify Commencement of Existence.*

First. The expressions "begotten," "set up," "brought forth," "first-born," "first-begotten," "only-begotten," "beginning of creation," &c.,

each and all, when applied to the existence of a being, naturally and necessarily convey the idea of a beginning of existence ; to endeavor to force some other meaning upon them, in support of any doctrine, should not be countenanced in dealing with the Scriptures.

All these expressions, and others of like import, are used by the sacred writers in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ *before* his incarnation. Now, as commencement of existence cannot be affirmed of deity or divinity, they must refer in some way to Christ as having had such commencement ; and since, as before seen, Christ did actually exist before the creation, while his body did not exist till about four thousand years afterwards, we are left to the alternative that the expressions above named refer to his human soul, if we admit, as most evangelical believers do, that he had such a soul. How he could make atonement for human souls without possessing one himself, is beyond our comprehension. On which last point, indeed, much more might be said.

SEC. III. — *Psalms* ii. 7, 8 ; *Colossians* i. 15, &c.

In Ps. ii. 7, 8, it is written : " The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son : this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me," &c. This is generally taken as an address of the Father to the Son. If this is a correct view (and we have not heard it questioned), we have the Father declaring to the Son his sonship, and referring to a period when

it commenced, — “this day.” Now, other Scriptures, such as “he was before all things,” and, “in the beginning of his way,” “before his works of old,” “from the beginning, or ever the earth was” (Prov. viii. 22, 23), show that the period marked by “this day” was before the creation.

Since, then, this “Son” had a commencement of existence, and that commencement was before the creation, are we not shut up to the conclusion that this begotten son of Jehovah was no less than the human soul of Christ? What else could he be? Not an eternal Son, for a time is designated by his Father when he was begotten, or had beginning of existence. Is there anything unnatural in this, or that looks like undue effort to make out a point?

Again: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father” (John i. 14). This Word is admitted to be the same being to whom Jehovah said, “Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee.” Now, as John tells us that the Word was with God in the beginning, the expression used by Jehovah, “this day,” fixes a period when the Son was begotten, or commenced his existence: that period, then, must have been anterior to the creation. Hence we arrive at the same conclusion as above, viz., that Jehovah’s Son, begotten at a certain period implied by the words “this day,” could not have had eternal existence, but was necessarily that human being, our “elder brother,” to whom

God said, "Let us make *man* in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Was he not that soul of Christ that came down from heaven, "was made flesh, or, united with flesh, and dwelt among men," of whom John says, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father"?

Observe now how John connects the "Word" with the "Son" of the Psalmist. Jehovah says, "Thou art my Son: this day have I *begotten* thee;" and John says, "We beheld his glory, as of the only-*begotten* of the Father."

See also Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27. "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God . . . also I will make him my first-born," &c. Does this language seem appropriate for God to use, speaking to a son of inherently equal existence, powers, and attributes with himself? How could God the Father make an eternal God the Son his first-born? Would not the Son have been the same as the Father? We are aware that this is primarily spoken of David; but it is generally understood as referring to the Messiah.

Let these two verses follow those quoted from the second Psalm, and suppose the language that of the Almighty Father to a literally begotten Son, soon after he was brought into existence, and see how appropriately they would read: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "He shall cry unto me, Thou art

my Father, my God, the rock of my salvation ; also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."

The above well accords with all the language of the Father concerning the Son, especially with the declaration, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Was it not to *the man* Jesus these words were addressed ?

Did not the human Jesus cry unto Him, "Father, save me from this hour" ? Did he not cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" ? And did he not make his Father the "rock of his salvation" during his whole ministry ?

The being in this eighty-ninth Psalm is evidently the same to whom God said in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son," &c., where, as has been shown, a period was fixed when he was begotten, a period previous to the creation. And let it be borne in mind that this Son, whose existence began at a period before the creation, was the self-same Son addressed, at his baptism, by the Father. In this Psalm the Son is represented as calling God his Father and his God, and is answered by God with a promise that he should be his first-born, and as such placed higher than the kings of the earth.

It is alleged that the term "first-born" is here given simply as a kind of title or position by which the receiver comes to possess special advantages ; and that reference is made to the Mosaic ritual, where the first-born in several ways had superi-

ority. But, it will be remembered, in that dispensation the first-born received the advantages conferred on him on the ground of his being the first-born son in the family : that fact gave him the pre-eminence. Thus Christ, as having been the first-born of the human family, has the pre-eminence over all the children of men.

His prior existence gives him the pre-eminence.

This well agrees with God's decree in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son : this day have I begotten thee : ask of me, and I *will give thee* the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession ;" and in the other Psalm, "*I will make him my first-born*, higher than the kings of the earth." Does he not receive the pre-eminence ? and does he not receive it on the ground of his being humanly the "first-born" or the "beginning" ?

In Col. i. 15, Paul calls him the "first-born of every creature." What did Paul mean by that expression ? Would it not convey to an impartial mind that he was the first in the order of the creation ?

And when we find this so fully corroborated by other scriptures, we are unable to attach to it any other meaning. If we are correct in so doing, what can this first-born be, other than the human soul of Jesus ?

Once admit that the man Jesus, as to his soul, was literally "the only-begotten Son" (John iii. 16), "the first-born of every creature," "the first-begotten" (Heb. i. 6), "the only-begotten of the

Father," and was with him "before all things" (Col. i. 17), and by union with him (John x. 30) was clothed with divine attributes, then all these and other expressions become clear and natural.

SEC. IV. — *John* vi. 62 ; xvi. 28.

The passages in John's Gospel having the same import are too numerous to mention. A few of the most prominent ones will be noticed, some of which seem to place the subject in such a light as to settle controversy.

"What and if ye shall see the *Son of man* ascend up where he was before?" (*John* vi. 62). Look a moment at this expression, "the Son of man." This title is applied in the New Testament to the Saviour more than forty times; and in all but two or three, Christ so calls himself. For the most part it refers to his humanity alone, either to the soul or the body, but more frequently to both. In a few instances it includes his divinity, as when he justifies his language to the palsied man: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (*Matt.* ix. 6); and again, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels" (*Matt.* xiii. 41). These and some other passages show his divine power; and he tells us from whom he received this power: "the *Father* that dwelleth in me, *he* doeth the works."

With this thought in view, let us again read the passage, "What and if ye shall see the *Son of man* ascend up where he was before?"

But, according to the common theory, when Christ spoke these words there had never been a "Son of man" in heaven, but a divine Son only. Were that the fact, why did not Christ so say? Why did he not say, "What and if ye shall see the Son of God ascend," &c.? That expression could include both natures; for the union of the divine Son with the man Jesus would make the divine Son and the human Jesus one: in that case, if Christ had said, "If ye shall see the Son of God ascend up where he was before," it would have been proper; for the soul and body, being united with the divine Son, must have ascended with him. But Christ did not so speak. His words are, "If ye shall see the *Son of man* ascend up where *he was before*." Observe, "Where *the Son of man was before*." As this name always included his humanity when applied to himself, does it not establish the point beyond question that his humanity was in heaven before he was manifested on earth?

Let it be remembered that Christ's question at this time was in answer to the murmurings of the disciples, who had said, "This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" "Does this offend you?" says Christ. "What will you say if you see me ascend up where I was before I came upon earth?" This seems to be the simple purport of the text: but Christ fixes it yet more definitely; and that there should be no mistake, he says "*the Son of man*." Did not Christ intend to convey to the disciples that it was this Son of man who should ascend, as

really as he intended to convey to them that it was this Son of man who should be betrayed and crucified, when he informed them of his arrest and execution?

So also in John xvi. 28: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father." Did not the disciples understand him to mean himself, as man, as he stood before them, when they answered (verse 29), "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb;" "By this we believe that thou camest forth from God"?

Did the disciples imagine there was a divine Son of God united with the man Jesus Christ, and that this divine Son was the being who came forth from God, and was to return to God? Did Christ intend they should so understand him? Jesus adds, (verse 32), "Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father [not divine Son] is with me." Do not the pronouns "me" and "I," in the above, refer exclusively to the man?

SEC. V.—*John* vi. 30.

In John vi. 30, Jesus says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Take this in connection with chap. v. 30, which reads thus: "As I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." As before remarked, these verses show that

there were *two wills in heaven*, the Father's and the Son's ; for he says, "I came down from heaven not *to do mine own will*."

Certainly, then, the Son had a will in heaven before he came to earth ; and that will, although in harmony with, was not, the Father's will : for he came down to do, not the one, but the other.

Now if this "I" and "my" and "mine" refer to a divine Son, this Son must have had a will separate from that of his Father. And if possessing a separate will, it follows he must have been a separate being ; for a divine Son, inherently of the same essence with his Father, could not have a separate will. Therefore the Son who came down from heaven exclusively to do his Father's will could not have been a divine Son.

We must keep in view it was Jesus Christ who "came down from heaven," for he says, "*I* came down from heaven." Clearly, then, it must have been that Son who could "do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do" (John v. 19).

What part of the complex Christ was it which came down from heaven ? His body had not yet been in heaven. Most assuredly, then, it must have been the human soul of Jesus. We have heard of but one way of treating these verses in John when supposed to apply to an eternal divine Son ; and that is the assertion, "The subject is a mystery !"

The mystery really is, how a thoughtful mind can be satisfied with such a statement, when the truth is so simple and clear. We know "secret

things belong to the Lord our God:" we also know that those "things which are revealed belong to us and our children" (Deut. xxix. 29).

If any doctrines of Christ are plainly revealed in the New Testament, it would seem that the existence of the human soul of Christ with his Father in heaven, before the creation, is one of them.

One would suppose the Saviour foresaw that error would find its way into the Church, calculated to mystify his glorious character, and that he was on his guard against the use of any words from which the idea of an eternal divine Son could be drawn; for he constantly uses language inconsistent with such a doctrine.

How often he repeats such expressions as, "I came *from* the Father," "came not of myself," "was sent," "was given," &c. ! If we mistake not, there are between thirty and forty instances in the Evangelists, where Christ alludes to himself, or is spoken of, as having been "*sent*;" and in every one the idea that his Father sent him is implied or expressed.

Now, all these irresistibly convey to the mind the idea of two beings, the one having superiority over the other. The mind as naturally receives this view as the lungs inhale the atmosphere. How unnatural the idea that one person of the Godhead should *send* another person of the Godhead ! These persons being, as is asserted, inherently "of the same essence, and equal in every divine perfection," there could of course be but one will; yet one

sends the other ! How could such a divine Son say, "I came not of myself," unless, as none would admit, there could be two wills in Deity ?

Would it not be just as proper to say that the Son sent the Father, who certainly was on earth ? — and, indeed, more proper, since Christ always recognized the Father as *dwelling* in him, and doing the works, but *never* mentions an eternal Son. If there were such a Son, must he not have remained in heaven ? We hear nothing of him on earth.

True, Peter says to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus himself, on his oath before the Sanhedrim, admits the same. It is asserted that the term Christ implies an eternal Son in these declarations. But whence the authority for this ? That he was a "begotten" Son is abundantly attested. Could he be both a begotten and unbegotten Son ?

SEC. VI. — *Christ's Prayer in John xvii.*

Again, it is evident that when Christ prayed, he prayed only as a man, a dependent human being. Although he was God by virtue of his peculiar union with the Father, yet his humanity was as dependent on the Father as if there had been no such connection ; as he says, "The Son can do nothing of himself." Of course, then, in his prayers at least, the pronouns "*I*" and "*me*" can refer only to his humanity.

Let us now turn to his memorable prayer in the

seventeenth of John. In the first verse he prays, "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee." Keeping in view that he prays as a man, and that the man praying is the Son, does he pray that an eternal Son may be glorified? Is it not, rather, that the human Son now praying may be glorified in the death, resurrection, and ascension which were just before him? Can it be difficult to determine these questions?

Also, take the fourth and fifth verses, where, after saying, "I have glorified thee on the earth," &c., implying that his whole aim, in his labors for the good of men, had been to exalt and glorify his Father, and that now it only remained to suffer, rise from the dead, and give the last instructions to his disciples, he introduces this remarkable petition: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." This petition, though short, is very comprehensive. It shows, first, that the man now praying had been with his Father before the creation of the world; second, that it was a state of glory in which he had been with his Father; third, that he had for a time been divested of much of that glory, having been engaged in completing a work which the Father had given him to do; and, fourth, that he now asks to be taken back into that glorious state which he enjoyed with the Father before his descent to earth.

What is there more in the whole scheme of redemption? We have Christ coming from heaven,

taking a human body, performing works of mercy as one of the human family, in that state fulfilling the divine law to its penalty, rising from under the same, proclaiming salvation to all who should believe on him, and then re-ascending to his native heaven : all this is directly or indirectly included in this short prayer.

Such seems to be a natural unfolding of the thoughts this prayer contains ; and it is difficult to see how any one can discover in it the idea of an eternal divine Son, who, as is commonly taught, laid aside his glory in order to dwell in the body of Jesus.

Now, if the position is correct, that Christ prayed only as a human being, then the view alluded to, which seems to divest the prayer of all its beauty and pathos, at once disappears.

How strangely it sounds to say that the eternal God the Son prays to the eternal God the Father to be re-invested with the glory which he had with him before he came to earth ! But admit that the soul of the man praying had been in heaven, in a state of union and glory with the Father, before his appearance "in the form of a servant" on earth, and the prayer at once becomes intelligible, and harmonious with all the teachings of Christ concerning himself.

See also the twenty-fourth verse, where Christ says, "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." This passage, we are aware, *may* be explained in the same way as those which speak of

believers as "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."

But it is more simple and natural to connect it with the prayer in the fifth verse. We should like to linger on this prayer, and to comment on some of its other expressions ; but it is not necessary. It may be said of it as a whole, as was remarked on verse 5, that, from beginning to end, it shows, as clearly as words can, an inferior being addressing one who is superior, a loving Father, on whom the suppliant is wholly dependent. If this is not the meaning, we frankly confess ourselves unable to understand it.

Let the reader remember, that, in deciding this question whether it is an eternal Son who is praying through the humanity of Jesus, or whether it is strictly the man Jesus himself who prays to his Father, we really decide the question as to the existence of an eternal Son ; for the being who offers this prayer is the one who was in glory with the Father before the world was.

Now what being could this be other than the human soul of Christ ?

But it may be said, "How could a created being be so united to the eternal God that the two should become one ?" We answer, as before, "We cannot tell." It will then be said, "Here, then, is a mystery." Most assuredly there is ; but is it any greater mystery that the man Jesus should be united to God his Father, than that the same man Jesus should, according to the general belief, be

united to God an eternal Son? In each case *equally* the divinity of the man would be the divinity which comes from union with Him who is inherently divine.

But this is not our only answer. It was the work of God. We do not profess to explain or understand the manner of God's doings further than it is revealed.

We have more than once alluded to the union of the human soul and body as an illustration of that celestial union; and we cannot do better.

We know, from our own consciousness, that the human soul and body are one; and we know that the begotten Son and his Father are one, because Christ and the apostles have so declared. All men acknowledge the fact in the former case; so will we speak and act in the latter.

SEC. VII.—*Description of Christ in Revelation.*

Before leaving this point of Christ as being in human nature with his Father prior to the incarnation, attention is called to one of the twenty appellations or descriptions which Christ applies to himself in his messages to the seven churches of Asia, contained in the second and third chapters of the Apocalypse. Each of these has something applicable to himself: several refer to his first appearance to John on the island.

Read concerning his appearance, and the further narration in Rev. i. 14-18. It will be seen that the person there speaking is "he that liveth and

was dead." This clause seems to be thrown in that John should not mistake the person, that it was truly Jesus of Nazareth. John says of him in the thirteenth verse that "he was like unto the Son of man." No one doubts that this person was Jesus Christ, "who had all power *given* to him in heaven and in earth ;" and in these presentations and messages he shows the disposition to be made of that power.

In the last one of these descriptions, he calls himself "the beginning of the creation of God."

Who this being was with whom God began his creation, has been shown under another head (see page 11). His appearance to John at first, and all the descriptions and representations that follow, go to establish the fact that it was Christ, as a man, who met and conversed with John ; and evidently it was the man Jesus, and his angels, who mostly communicated with John on the island.

If, then, it was the man Jesus whom John saw in such majesty, it must have been the same who was "the beginning of the creation of God ;" therefore it must have been as a man that he was with his Father before the creation of the world.

We now think it has been fully shown that there were two wills in heaven before the creation ; and if two wills, then two beings ; and that one of these beings could be no other than that human soul of Christ that came down and dwelt with men, as one of the human family.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST?

ADVANCING now to another point of this subject, we hope to show to the satisfaction of every candid mind, *that the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ consists in the union of his humanity with the eternal God his Father*, and not, as is generally held, *with an eternal divine Son*.

SEC. I. — *Christ affirms that all his Works are by the Power of the Father.*

In all Christ's teachings as to his divine nature, as has been before remarked, there is not the first instance of so much as an allusion to a connection with a divine Son, nor even the most distant hint of the existence of such a Son. Attention is called to this fact as a strong inferential evidence of his non-existence.

On the contrary, whenever he refers to his divine nature and power, he invariably attributes all to his Father. The passages are too numerous to quote, the Evangelists, especially John, abounding in them. We select a few of the more prominent, some of which have already been introduced. John xiv. 7: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him."

How had the disciples seen the Father? Jesus tells us: "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." He does not say "in the divine Son's name," which doubtless he would have said if he had been united to such a Son, and wrought by his power.

The disciples had seen the Father in him, in the divine works which he did, just as John had "heard, seen, and handled the word of life;" and just as we should say of a neighbor, "I saw Mr. A.," when we had seen only the body: the soul, the real man, we had not seen. In the same sense Jesus says, "He that seeth me seeth him that sent me" (John xii. 45), and he tells us many times who it was that sent him.

In answer to the request of Philip, to show them the Father, he expresses surprise that, after all they had seen of his divine works, and his repeated assertions of his inability to do them of himself, and that he did them all by his Father, they should still be ignorant of his true character; and he further assures them (chap. xiv. 9-11) that it was by his union with the Father that all his wonderful works were performed.

But as he was "in the Father and the Father in him," and "he and the Father were one" (that is, one by the union of the two), there belonged to him the nature and the powers of each; and he could do the works of both the Father and the human Son.

Accordingly he says (John x. 37), "If I do not

the works of my Father, believe me not." He acknowledges that this claim to union with his Father is not entitled to be accepted on his bare statement, but needs to be proved by other evidence ; therefore he says, " The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."

Other teachings of his had their evidence largely in themselves ; but this claim of a special union with the Father needed the further evidence of his divine works.

Thus we have in Jesus Christ the God-man, or " God with us," in the clearest possible sense. In this way alone does he assert for himself divine power and authority, attributing all to his Father, the one supreme God.

Where, then, is there the slightest ground for imagining an eternal Son between God the Father and the man Jesus thus conversing with the disciples? Had there been such a Son, must he not have known it? And, if he knew it, would he not have made some allusion to it, that the Church might not have been left for ages to conjectures on the subject? He came to *instruct* in the things of the kingdom of heaven, as well as to save the souls of men.

If, therefore, the doctrine of an eternal Son of God, held to be so fundamental in the economy of salvation, be true, it certainly detracts from the character of the blessed Saviour, that, in all his teachings in the course of his ministry, he should not give so much as one hint of it to his disciples.

SEC. II. — *Retrospective View.*

Let us now look, for a moment, at the Scriptures thus far employed in our argument, with perhaps a few others, by way, mainly, of recapitulation.

The following expressions are generally admitted to refer to Jesus Christ : he was "the beginning of the creation of God ;" "he was before all things ;" he was "in the beginning ;" he "was possessed of Jehovah in the beginning of his way ;" he "was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or *ever the earth was.*"

He was united with God in the creation of the world : for "God created the heavens and the earth ;" and "the Son made all things, visible and invisible ;" and "by him God made the worlds." He was with God in the creation of man. He left heaven and came to earth ; for "he came forth from the Father, and came into the world." He was *sent* into the world by his Father. He was sent to do a certain work.

While performing his works on earth, he speaks to his disciples of his "ascending up where he was before." He says he "knows Him who sent him, for he was from him."

Having established the fact of his union with his Father, he then prays to be reinstated in the exalted condition which he necessarily laid aside to dwell with men on the earth. And having fulfilled in the flesh all the divine requirements,

in spirit, word, and deed, he then, on the cross, makes his last public proclamation, which was to all the world, "It is finished."

Having thus far examined the Scriptures mainly relied on to prove the existence of an eternal Son of God, and called attention to their simple, literal import, we think we may challenge any one to say if we have sought to pervert them, or draw from a single passage an unwarranted meaning.

We have also endeavored to show, from the Saviour's own teachings, in what his divine nature and power to work miracles consisted.

It may be said that we set aside the fundamental doctrine of the divinity of the Son of God, and reduce him to a mere man. Confessedly, we do regard the Son of God as man; but we recognize him also, in the highest sense, as God, by such a union with God as that he and his Father are One.

We have endeavored to be explicit on this point, believing the doctrine of the union of divinity and humanity to lie at the basis of salvation through the atonement of Christ; for, without such union of God with man, it does not appear that there could be an atonement.

Do we make the Son of man less divine by believing his own words, that his divinity is of his Father, than we should by believing the words of men, who say it consisted in a union with a divine Son?

He tells us his divinity is of the Father: men tell us it is of a divine Son.

We believe we have shown that the Lord Jesus Christ is as truly divine as he is human; that he possessed three natures: first, that of God the Father, the divine nature; second, the human soul, the human immortal nature; third, the body, the material nature,—these three united in one. The natural eye could see only one; but the other two were really the acting power to perform the work through the body.

SEC. III.—*Respecting Arianism.*

It is said, again, that these views differ little from those of the old Arians.

We admit that there is a point of resemblance between the position here taken and that of the Arians, viz., the impossibility of a Father and a Son existing co-eternally.

Arianism, it is well known, took its rise from the address of Bishop Alexander to his presbyters and lesser clergy, wherein he asserts that the Son is co-eternal, co-equal, and co-essential with the Father.

To this statement Arius took exception, saying that there could not be a Father and a Son of co-eval existence. Alexander strenuously maintained his position, which had long been the general doctrine of the Church; and most of the bishops and presbyters went with him. Arius as firmly kept his ground, that it is impossible for the Son to be co-eternal with his Father. Thus the division in

the Church commenced. Each party had its adherents.

So far as we have been able to learn, Arius, before this controversy arose, stood as well in the Church for piety and zeal as others of his order. At first he did not deny the divinity of the Son, but acknowledged him as the second person in the Godhead. But the Arians soon saw that they must either give up the doctrine of the Son's innate divinity, or admit his co-eternity with the Father; for if he was not thus co-eternal, he could not be inherently divine: and they chose to surrender the idea of his divinity.

As, however, the evidence that he existed before the creation of the world, and took part in that creation, was too strong to be denied, they called him the first and highest of all created beings.

To trace the subsequent history of Arianism, with its various parties and gross errors, till it became virtually extinct, is foreign to our purpose.

Alexander's party, which was the Trinitarian, saw an inexplicable difficulty in their doctrine of a trinity in the Godhead. The divinity of the Son was too clearly taught in the Bible for them to think of relinquishing that. On this also rested their hopes of salvation.

But to call the Son divine when he was not God in the highest sense, was to them a contradiction; and if he was God in this sense, he must, they thought, have existed from eternity. How a Father and a Son could be each from eternity, they could

not explain ; and consequently, as it was a matter relating to the Divine existence, they took refuge in the conclusion that it was an inexplicable mystery.

In most of the various councils subsequently called, this subject was discussed, and often at much length, until finally it was settled according to the Athanasian Creed, which teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet the three Persons are but one God.

How the personal Father, the personal Son, and the personal Holy Ghost could exist as one God, was left a mystery. It became, however, the doctrine of the Church, and has so continued down to the present day. Hundreds of biblical students have written on this doctrine ; but no one has explained it.

The exact date of its introduction into the Church we have been unable to learn. Probably it was brought forward in the third, or latter part of the second century, when almost all sorts of speculations were rampant in the Church. Guericke's concise account of those times shows that almost every school, and many bishops, agitated the community with some new doctrines or systems. We hear Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea early in the fourth century, say that "he was early taught it while a catechumen, and also by his predecessors." Is not this a tacit confession that he did not receive it from the teachings of Christ or his apostles ?

No doubt numberless disciples can say with Eusebius, that "they were early taught it;" but can any believer in the doctrine say that it was taught him from the Holy Scriptures?

The difficulty with both Alexander and Arius, and their great error, appears to have been in supposing, in common with their predecessors, that the humanity of Christ, including soul and body, took its origin with the babe in Bethlehem. Not doubting that this was the fact, each framed his theory accordingly.

Hence, the Arians, while exalting him as a creature, denied that he was God. The Trinitarians, unable to give up the idea of his proper divinity, maintained that he was the Son of God from all eternity. Thus arose the doctrine of his *eternal generation*.

Now, had the Church teachers of those times carefully studied the words of Jesus, and the writings of John and Paul, on this subject, instead of relying on their instructors and predecessors, we think they would have found, in the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, an intermediate point of view, which would have saved them from these conflicting theories.

The Trinitarian would have seen that the Son, begotten "before the world was," but not from eternity, could be truly God by union with his Father.

The Arian, too, would have learned that it was possible for him to maintain that the Son is a cre-

ated and derived being, without denying his real divinity.

So far as Arius asserts the strict unity of God, the impossibility of a Son being co-eternal with his Father, and his consequently derived existence, it will be seen that our views agree. But when he denies that the Son is truly divine as God is divine, we must leave him, and "walk no more with him," for Christ says, "I and my Father are one."

Also, when the Trinitarian affirms that the Son or Logos is God, and possesses all divine attributes, we join heart and hand with him. We differ only when he teaches that the Son was co-existent with the Father, by "eternal generation," and was inherently divine. John the Baptist says, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."



CHAPTER VI.

THE TRINITY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

SEC. I.—*Non-personality of the Spirit in the Old Testament.*

THE views of the Son of God that have now been advanced, it will be seen, are in conflict with the doctrine of an eternal Trinity. But if there was no eternal Son, there could have been no "second

person in the Godhead ;” and consequently no eternal Trinity.

It will be remembered the position taken (page 12) was that God existed as one Being up to the begetting of the Son, but not (so far as we know) as Father, for there was no Son.

But there is a Trinity, adapted to our needs, of which the New Testament speaks, which will now be considered, together with the Personality of the Spirit.

That there are three distinct personalities or agents in the Christian economy, the Scriptures clearly teach, each having his appropriate sphere in man’s salvation ; and these three are, most emphatically, one. The two distinct persons, Father and Son, have already been considered, and their unity : we come now to the personality of the Holy Spirit, called by Jesus “the Comforter.”

At the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, Jesus made this declaration : “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” John adds : “But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive ; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John vii. 38, 39). This he said in accordance with Christ’s words in his last address to the disciples, where he declared, “It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John xvi. 7). Here we

have the testimony of Christ and John, that, before Christ's ascension, the Comforter or Holy Ghost had not come ; and each gives the same reason, viz., because Jesus had not ascended, or was not yet glorified.

But, notwithstanding these declarations, we find, both in the Old Testament and the New, various works and manifestations, all which occurring prior to Christ's ministry, are attributed by the New Testament writers to the "Holy Ghost."

"David said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said unto my Lord," &c. (Mark xii. 36). "Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21). The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee ;" and when she visited her cousin, and told her what the angel had announced, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." When John the Baptist was born, "his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost." "It was revealed to Simeon by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ." "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned into Galilee."

These and other acts, as just observed, are ascribed to the divine Spirit before Christ and John taught that the Holy Ghost had not yet come.

Now, what were all the acts of the Spirit ? What else were they than God communicating (through the begotten Son) his will to men ? His usual way of making known his will was by divine im-

pression, attributing it to his Spirit. There were, however, other ways. It is often said, "The Lord spake:" whether using the human voice or some other instrumentality is not material.

As, however, the "worlds were made" through the begotten human Son, we cannot see why he should not speak words through him; and it would seem that God did sometimes speak with a human voice. He "called unto Adam, and *said*, Where art thou?" and, "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" likewise to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and others. We see no good reason to doubt that, in these cases, a human voice was used; and, indeed, we are told that on one occasion God did use a voice. Ex. xix. 19: "Moses spake; and God answered him by a voice." There were also divine messages through angels, through dreams, signs, visions, &c. Can any one discover a third person in the Godhead in these means of divine communication?

Were not these simply the movements or actions of that complex Being who created the heavens and the earth? Is there any more need of recognizing a third person in these ancient acts of God than in his acts in the creation?

God, by and through his begotten Son, spake, and it was done. What person more was needed?

"But," says one, "a third person seems distinctly recognized in the declaration, 'The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.'"

Would not the same sense be conveyed if it had

been written, "God moved upon the face of the waters"? What else, in fact, was this but God's own movement? It will be observed that this sentence, like the preceding, is general in its character. The narrative begins with general announcements. First, "God created the heavens and the earth." Next, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." But no act of creation is yet defined; there is simply the general description of movement. The narrator then proceeds to describe the different acts. No one, it is presumed, will say this movement was not God's act.

Now, let us see what was specifically done by this general movement. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Where is the third person in this act? And yet this comes under that general movement in which many think they see a third person. Again, "God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," &c.; and God *made* the firmament, and *divided* the waters, &c.; "and it was so." Can any one discover a third person in this? Yet this is another act of the general movement.

So with regard to all the movements of God in the creation, and indeed in respect to all the divine movements down to the Pentecostal advent. We can find just as much, and no more, of a third person in them than we can in the acts of the creation.

But suppose there were such a person in Deity from eternity, of what possible benefit could it be

to the human family? What advantage would it be to believe that God performed a part of his works through an indescribable third person?

Certainly *all* his works were not done through such an agency, for Paul repeatedly assures us he created the world by his Son; and unquestionably all the divine works that were wrought on earth while Christ was in the flesh were performed through the Son. Where, then, is the evidence, or ground for supposition even, that from the Creation to the Incarnation all God's works were not performed on this same principle?

Is it not more simple, intelligible, and attracting to consider God as performing *all* his works (of which we have any knowledge) in one and the same manner in which he performed a part of them, viz., by and through his well-beloved, first-begotten Son, even our Elder Brother? How near it brings God to us (or, rather, how near it brings us to Him), to contemplate the eternal Deity as working by our Brother-man!

In this plan of God's operation, is it too much to think we see, in our own constitution, an analogy or emblem of this method of divine working? As the soul of man, as before observed, makes all its manifestations through the body with which it is united, so God acts through his human Son, united to him.

Again, where is the necessity for a third person? We have the Eternal God in union with this only-begotten Son, who has ever been, and still is,

accessible to each of the human race — all-powerful, able to speak even a world into existence, forming a complete “way” of sympathizing communication with man, capable of imparting instruction in any form or manner that the case may require. What greater provision could we ask, or even conceive of, from our Heavenly Father?

Again, consider the *inconsistency* of distinguishing a third person in the passage under consideration. The account states that He “moved upon the face of the waters.” And this is all that is said concerning him (if our memory serves us), for nearly sixteen hundred years: no allusion to him throughout the description of the creation; nothing in all God’s subsequent dealings with men, that can reasonably be attributed to a third person, until the days of Noah, when God said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” And would not the same idea have been conveyed had he said, “I will not always strive with man,” or “My influence shall not,” &c.?

If we can discover a third person in this saying to Noah, why not likewise in the words of Job, David, and others who make use of similar language?

Let us look at some of the passages which are thought to teach an eternal third person in the Godhead. “The Spirit of God moved” (Gen. i. 2); “Man in whom the Spirit of God is” (Gen. xli. 38); “Filled with the Spirit of God” (Ex. xxxi. 3); “The Spirit of God was upon him” (1 Sam.

xix. 23) ; " The Spirit of God made me " (Job xxiii. 4) ; and many other like passages.

Now, what do these expressions signify other than God acting, God moving, or the influence of God on men ? " God is a spirit ; " if therefore he acts at all, he must act as a spirit ; unless he should assume material form, which with his Son he did do on certain occasions.

Where is the propriety of inferring a third person from the expression, " The Spirit of God moved," more than when we say, the spirit of man moved ? In the latter case, is not the act always and properly ascribed to the actor himself ? Why not equally so in the former ?

SEC. II. — *The Spirit at Christ's Baptism.*

It is commonly held that the Trinity was fully demonstrated at Christ's baptism. The Father spake from heaven ; the Son, now incarnate, was present ; and the Spirit, " the third person," descended in the form of a dove, and abode upon him. And this occurring before the noted day of Pentecost, " it proves," says one, " that the Trinity existed before that day."

No doubt it does seem satisfactory proof to such a one, in the same way as the first verses in John's Gospel " prove " to commentators the eternity of the Son. When the mind is once fixed on certain views as being Christian doctrine, it can find what seems abundant proof of the same in the Bible. The greatest care should be taken lest our minds

be influenced by preconceptions, and that we ever be resolved to seek only the mind of Christ.

A different view may be drawn from the circumstances at the baptism, that may seem, in the minds of some, to come nearer the facts in the case. A change was now to be made in the visible methods of divine communication. All the various ways heretofore employed were about to cease, and their place be filled by this visible Son.

Two highly important matters were to be presented: first, and undoubtedly the greatest, to announce to John, and through him to the world, that this man whom he had just baptized was the Son of God; and that consequently he was the long looked for Messiah. John evidently apprehended the object of this wonderful manifestation.* John the Evangelist also understood it, as appears in his first Epistle, as we shall see hereafter.

The second object was to call the attention of the people away from all previous means of divine communication, and point them to this Son, inasmuch as he, during his ministry, was to be their only divine Teacher. To establish these things beyond question, the full requirement of the Jewish law as to witnesses, even in capital cases, was met, and a triple testimony furnished. It will be remem-

* If we turn to John i. 32-34, we shall see the object of the dove's descent. John was the first and the only man who introduced Jesus to the world as the Lamb of God, and also as the Son of God. We there see John's authority for so doing.

bered that Christ was accustomed to call three witnesses to many of his important acts. Surely this was an occasion of the greatest magnitude ; all those outward means formerly used in conveying the divine will were to be changed, and transferred to this man Jesus, who stood before them.

Now, was it not as easy for this Being to assume the form of a dove, or to speak from heaven, or perform any other act in heralding this heaven-and-earth-born One, as to cure the leper, or call the dead to life ?

It must not be forgotten that this was that same united complex Being who, more than four thousand years before, said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Why make Him a third person because assuming the form of a dove for a specific purpose, any more than because of his assuming the human form, as he did before Joshua by the walls of Jericho ? — or with Jacob when he wrestled with him till break of day ?

If the words of Peter, "Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," are brought as an objection to our position, on the ground that they imply the existence of the Spirit as a person in the days of the prophets, the answer is, that Peter might quite properly write thus some thirty years after the divine influence had been personified as the Comforter or Holy Ghost, by the authority of Christ.

But why spend time in showing there was no *personal* Holy Ghost prior to his advent on the

day of Pentecost? We have Christ's positive words, as before quoted, that if he went not away, the Comforter would not come. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you;" plainly showing that he had not then come. And he further says, "The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost." John, also, referring to a declaration of Christ a few months previous to the above, affirms, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Thus the unequivocal declarations of Christ and John stand together, that the Comforter or Holy Ghost *had not come* previous to Christ's ascension.

If any one should be willing to confront this twofold testimony and declare the Holy Ghost had come, and was a third person in the Godhead from eternity, we can only say, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet," for thou treadest on holy ground.

We well know that efforts, which we hardly know how to characterize as other than sophistical, have been put forth to compel these witnesses to testify what they never did, nor ever intended to testify. But the inspired word, and that only, with what is conformed thereto, will stand until the visible heavens and earth shall pass away.

When, however, Christ was baptized, and began his public ministry, and the people were directed to him by the manifestation at the baptism, he now becomes not only the spiritual, as he always had been, but also the only visible channel of divine communication. And why should he not be?

The spiritual days-man he had been ever since man was on earth. Now, furnished with a body, through its organs he can talk with men as men talk with one another; and, being *one with the Father, God through him communicates orally, familiarly, and in sympathy with man.*

WONDERFUL PROVISION!

For a moment let us contemplate Christ talking to and with men as another man; and, being this wonderful, complex person, as represented, how naturally and appropriately such sentences as the following fall from his lips! "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John vii. 16). Here, we must see, Christ was speaking expressly as a man; for the expressions "*my*," "*mine*," and "*me*" could not include a divine Son, for if they did, the doctrine must have been as really his as his Father's.

But an entirely dependent human being as Jesus frequently declared himself to be, could say so with propriety; for he received his doctrine from his Father. He continues (v. 17), "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

What this doctrine was, he tells us in John vi. 40: "Every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." This is the doctrine he ever preached, until he was nailed to the cross.

SEC. III. — *Christ during his Ministry the sole Channel of Divine Communication.*

Thus a small volume might be filled in showing that Christ as a man, during the three and a half years of his ministry, was the sole organ of divine communication between God and the human family. The Spirit and the power were given to the apostles only through the man Jesus.

Thus the writer to the Hebrews says (i. 1, 2), "God, who at sundry times and in *divers manners* spake in time past unto the fathers by *the prophets*, hath in these last days spoken unto us *by his Son*." Remember what has been said, that God, in all his dealings with man, spoke and acted solely through his Son ; these verses further show that the visible person of the Son took the place of all the previous outward means of the divine communication.

But this earthly relation of Christ to men could be but temporary. He came into the world to be more than a mere teacher. He was to *do* the will of his Father, in the flesh, obeying not only all the ritual and moral precepts, but fulfilling also the divine mandate in relation to his brother-man on earth, whom he saw lost in sin, and under sentence of both temporal and spiritual death. Man had disinherited himself of eternal life, and consequently had been forbidden access to its emblem, the tree of life. Cast out of Paradise, it had become his doom, after a few years of anxiety and toil, to

take up his abode with him whose suggestions he had adopted, instead of obeying his Maker's commands.

The Son saw all this, and gave himself to the appointed work of providing redemption for his lost brother and his descendants. He met fully the demands of the law, which he voluntarily took upon himself by becoming the Son of man ; * bore, both in soul and body, the heavy burden of man's sin and condemnation ; and then his soul, united with a glorified body, re-ascended to his native heaven. And now in his absence who should be the agent of divine communication ?

Before Christ's baptism there were, as we have seen, many visible ways of conveying the Divine will. During his ministry he was the only channel, or, to use his own words, "the way." But now that he has returned into heaven, who is to bring to man the knowledge of divine things ?

SEC. IV.—*Personality of the Spirit, the Comforter.*

In answering this question, we give our understanding of the personality of the Spirit, or the third person in the Christian Trinity. Our views are drawn chiefly from the address of Christ to the apostles at the last passover (John xiv.—xvi).

In this address, spoken after the institution of the Supper, he seeks to prepare them for the dark and discouraging scene which, unconsciously to them, was just before them, when all their hopes

* See Appendix.

and expectations were to be apparently overthrown. He explains to them his character as God and man, shows them what constituted his divinity, and by what power and authority he had performed his superhuman works, and tells them, that, though he is to leave them, he will yet extend to them a watchful care through one whom he calls "the Comforter."

While, however, the name is new, the agent and the acting would be the same as before ; namely, that of the Father in union with himself. By this agency was spiritual instruction to be given in all coming time. In order that they and all future disciples might have a more distinct and palpable object before their minds than they could otherwise have, this divine spiritual manifestation he now *personifies*, — "The Comforter."

Heretofore, the name applied to this divine influence had been "the Spirit of God" (Gen. i. 2), "the good Spirit" (Neh. ix. 20), "Spirit of the prophets" (Neh. ix. 30), "the divine Spirit," "Thy Spirit," "Holy Ghost," &c., as before shown. All these expressions, and others of like import, could refer to but one influence ; and that was God acting or moving, without any authorized personality of those movements.

But now, when Christ, through whom God since the baptism had acted visibly, was to be withdrawn, there needed to be prominently before the minds of the disciples, in Christ's place, some other spiritual instructor, a distinct personal agent.

Therefore he says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter." Does he mean another being like himself? — one who could go in and out with them, as he had done? No; but he personifies, in the use of this term, the new Agent by which they were to be empowered. With the apostles the wish would naturally arise to learn something more about this promised Helper; and, that Christ might not leave them in anxious doubt, he says, "I will come unto you," teaching them that in the Comforter he includes himself. Throughout this address he impresses upon them the idea, that henceforward the Comforter alone is to give instruction in heavenly things.

To impress this more indelibly upon their minds and the minds of all future disciples, he condescended to have this personified agent presented to their physical senses. Therefore the Comforter was first manifested as a "*rushing mighty wind*." Mark how this is worded. Acts ii. 2, 3, 4: "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Their ears were therefore saluted by the approach of this divine agent in his new, personified character. He was next manifested to another of their senses: "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Here we have three distinct witnesses to the

advent of this new Agent: the hearing, the sight, and the new power. And as we had a triple testimony when Jesus was introduced as the sole Agent of divine communication to man, so we have a similar testimony in these witnesses on the introduction of this new agency into his dispensation.

It must still be remembered that the divine power or influence is just the same as it was in the creation, and in every age after. The change is only in the dispensation or manner of communication; that is, from the visible Jesus to this invisible Agent, the Comforter.

Now, in this Comforter we find a third person, which constitutes a Trinity in the Christian dispensation.

It may be asked, Why recognize a person in this divine influence now, and not prior to this event, when it is claimed to be the same influence as it always had been both in and since the creation? The answer is, Because Jesus personified it by giving it a new name, the which implies a person; and by calling him *another* Comforter; showing that this Agent was to succeed him as the only divine Teacher. Also he ever after applies to him the masculine personal pronouns "he" and "him," which we think was never done before. We cannot conceive why Jesus should call him *another*, if he had always been a person.

We should not, now, dare to personify him, did we not feel authorized by Christ's words. Up to

the period of his declarations on this point we find no authority for designating this united influence of Father and Son as a person. Men have personified it and made it an eternal third person in the Godhead, but *we* cannot find their authority.

We shall say more on this point after we have listened to what Christ tells us of this Comforter.

SEC. V. — *Christ's Testimony to the Comforter.*

That there might be no misunderstanding as to the "Comforter" whom he now introduces to his disciples, he gives them a full and complete explanation of his person, character, office, and works, set forth in the memorable address to which we have alluded. It is important that due attention be given to these instructions, as they are the only information of the kind that we have of this person, except what may be gathered from his operations. And, as these instructions are in detached paragraphs in the above address, they may be better understood if viewed connectedly, as follows :—

John xiv. 16 : "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

Verse 17 : "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Verse 18 : "I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you."

Verse 23 : "If a man love me, he will keep my

words: and my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make *our abode with him.*"

Verse 25: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you."

Verse 26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom *the Father will send in my name*, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Chap. xv. 26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom *I will send unto you* from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Chap. xvi. 7: "I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, *I will send him unto you.*"

Verse 8: "And when he is come, he will reprove [or convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

Verse 9: "Of sin, because they believe not on me."

Verse 10: "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more."

Verse 11: "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Verse 12: "I have many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now."

Verse 13: "Howbeit, when *he, the Spirit of truth, is come*, he will guide you into all truth: for

he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ; and he will show you things to come."

Verse 14 : " He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Verse 15 : " All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

This, in a condensed and consecutive form, is Christ's description of the Comforter. Now let us analyze it, and see what it contains.

1. He should come in answer to Christ's prayer. " I will pray the Father ;" John xiv. 16.

2. He should be given by the Father. " And He shall give you another Comforter ;" *ib.*

3. He should abide with the disciples forever. " That he may abide with you forever ;" *ib.*

4. He is the Spirit of truth. " Even the Spirit of truth ;" v. 17.

5. He would not be seen by the world. " The world seeth him not ;" *ib.*

6. The world would not know him. " Neither knoweth him ;" *ib.*

7. He would be known by the disciples. " But ye know him ;" *ib.*

8. He would dwell with them. " For he dwelleth with you ;" *ib.*

9. He would be in them. " And shall be in you ;" *ib.*

10. In his coming Christ would come to them. " I will come to you ;" v. 18.

11. In his coming the Father and the Son come to the disciples. "We will come and make our abode with him;" v. 23.

12. He is the Holy Ghost. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost;" v. 26.

13. He is sent by the Father in Christ's name. "Whom the Father will send in my name;" *ib.*

14. He should teach the disciples all things. "He shall teach you all things;" *ib.*

15. He should bring to their remembrance his instructions. "And bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said;" *ib.*

16. He should be sent from the Father by Christ. "Whom I will send from the Father;" xv. 26.

17. He should proceed from the Father. "Which proceedeth from the Father;" *ib.*

18. He should testify of Christ. "He shall testify of me;" *ib.*

19. He would not come unless Christ should depart. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you;" xvi. 7.

20. Christ would send him if he departed. "But if I depart I will send him unto you;" *ib.*

21. He should reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment. "He will reprove the world," &c.; v. 8.

22. He should guide into all truth. "He shall guide you into all truth;" v. 13.

23. He should show things to come. "He will show you things to come;" *ib.*

24. He should show the things of the Father, for they are the things of Christ. "All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you ;" v. 15.

25. He should show the things of Christ. "He shall take of mine and show it unto you ;" *ib.*

All this is what Christ tells us of the Comforter. He must therefore possess all the attributes of the Deity ; for in his coming the Father comes. He must possess the nature, sympathies, and rational powers of *man* ; for in the Comforter's coming, Jesus says repeatedly *he* would come. Therefore, in the coming of the Comforter there is really and comprehensively the coming of both the Father and the Son. The Comforter, then, must be both the Father and the Son *acting jointly*, or, in other words, that same complex Being who had performed all the divine works from the beginning.

Thus, we see, the Father and the Son, *jointly acting*, constitute the Comforter ; i. e., the Father and Son jointly acting is by the authority of the Saviour personified, and thus constituted a person, called "another," because he was now and ever after to perform his works in this new situation, in the place of all the former means and agents of divine communication, especially that of the visible Son during his ministry, whose visibility was now to cease.

Further, this agent would be empowered to com-

municate what no former agent had done, or could do, during their agency. His prerogative would be to teach the things of Christ ; that is, his character, and, more especially, the way of salvation through his death and resurrection.

Another reason, and not the least, for personifying this new agency was, that this Comforter would be in all after ages the principal, if not *only*, acting divine Teacher, as before stated.

And now, what a Person is brought before us in this Comforter ! The God of the universe, the Eternal and the Almighty, in union with the begotten Son, under this new name, or under the name of the Holy Ghost or the divine Spirit (the particular name is immaterial), comes and makes his abode with men *forever*, expressly to teach them the things of his kingdom.

How fitly is this new ministration of spiritual truth introduced !—by a “ sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind,” and by “ cloven tongues as of fire.” The Church now takes an advance such as she had never taken before. For more than four thousand years she had been creeping, in her infancy, through the mist of figure, type, and emblem, until their fulfilment in the Messiah.

During the ministry of John the Baptist, and even that of Christ, she was still comparatively in the dark as to the nature of Christ's kingdom.

SEC. VI.—*Pentecost, or the Comforter's Advent.*

The disciples of that day, though believing him to be "the Christ of God," yet understood not his errand into the world. It remained for the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, — that is, the Father and the Son moving or "coming" together, — to develop to the Church finally and fully the grand principles and doctrines of the gospel. All this was accomplished by the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and how wonderfully was this done! "It filled all the house where they were sitting;" and the cloven fiery tongues "sat on each of them;" and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

After this great manifestation, we no longer hear the disciples saying, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel;" or, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

It flashed upon them with convincing power, that the kingdom which Christ came to establish is "not of this world." Peter began at once to preach remission of sins through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. This was the first thorough gospel sermon; and three thousand were converted and baptized before the setting of the sun.

What a day for the Church! We could almost say it was her birthday. Emerging from so long a period of darkness, mist, and twilight, there now opens on her the full radiance of a cloudless sun.

True, the gospel had been preached to men ever since the first interview of Christ with his brother, man, in the garden, after the transgression ; very dimly at first, but opening gradually with the ages.

It made some progress under Moses, and far greater in the personal ministry of Christ. Although Jesus preached the gospel, yet it was that the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*. He did not and could not, under the circumstances, preach salvation through his own death and resurrection, unless he did it in prospect ; but now the mystery of redemption, hidden for ages, was made clear to the understanding by this spiritual Teacher. For after Christ's ascension there was still need of a personal teacher to whom the disciples might look for all necessary spiritual instruction ; and in this person, the promised Comforter, this need was fully met.

Let the reader here pause a moment, and contemplate this person, the Comforter, as he is set forth in the teachings of the Saviour : first, the Eternal God the Father ; second, his begotten Son Jesus Christ ; and third, their joint acting and influence, personified as Comforter, or by some equivalent name ; and by the Saviour's authority constituted a person ; hence being of necessity the third person of the Trinity in the economy of grace and salvation. Is it difficult to see that these three are one ?

We drop our pen, and contemplating this infinitely wise and sublime arrangement of mercy,

our eyes moistening with gratitude, we exclaim with Paul, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. xi. 33, 34.)

Who, indeed, but Deity, all-wise and all-merciful, could have devised a scheme so well adapted to glorify his exalted name, and at the same time so exactly suited to the wants of finite, fallen man?



CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER TESTIMONY CONCERNING THE COMFORTER.

SEC. I. — *John's Trinity.*

CAN any fail to see that this is just the Trinity introduced by John? In his first Epistle, v. 7, he says, "There are three that bear record in heaven, — the Father, the Word [or Logos], and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one." He means, if we understand him, "There are three in heaven that bear record;" for surely he could not have intended to say that the three are bearing record to the inmates of heaven : they need no such testimony : it was for men on earth that they were designed. The whole context supports this idea.

It may help to a clearer understanding of this passage, on which so much has been written, if we inquire, What is the testimony of these witnesses? of what do they bear record? What, indeed, can it be, but that which John is seeking to establish in this whole Epistle, and especially in the context; namely, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that in him is eternal life.

To establish this doctrine more firmly, he calls in these witnesses, then in heaven, as having borne testimony to it at Christ's baptism, — a testimony which was addressed even to the outward senses of men. The Father in an audible voice says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Son stands among them as a man, then beginning that ministry during which he endeavored to reveal himself as the Son of God, and that in him was eternal life. Then, in the presence of all, the Spirit alights upon him in "bodily shape as a dove."

Here were the "three witnesses," all of them "in heaven" when John wrote, some sixty years after their testimonies were given. It is clear, too, that the three are one; for Jesus says that he and his Father are one; and we have seen that the Spirit is their combined action, personified, and therefore one with the Father and the Son. The testimony of the three we have also shown to be one. This testimony was given on earth; and the record thereof was on earth when John wrote; and it will remain to the end of time,

bearing witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that in him is eternal life.

Not, however, until the economy of redemption was fully laid open, was it needful, or even proper, that this divine agent should be specially designated as a person ; for not till then could his new lesson of instruction be clearly and fully taught. How could the way of salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ be clearly taught and understood until these events had taken place ?

Hence it *was* "expedient," not only for the apostles, but for all men, that he "should go away," in order that the Comforter might come ; and, lest the disciples should imagine Him to be some being hitherto to them unknown, he tells them that the promised Comforter "is the Holy Ghost."

As if further to guard them against the idea of an imaginary mystical being, or some division of a being, he declares that the Comforter is the united manifestation of the Father and of himself ; saying, "*We* will come, and make *our* abode with you." How could the Father and Son come and make their abode with the disciples, but by their combined influence or movement ? And how do they now come but by the same influence, which Christ calls the Comforter ? It would seem that not a word or expression is wanting to make this matter clear as is consistent with the brevity of revelation.

It has been questioned, whether the action of a being can be properly so personified as to justify the application to it of the personal pronoun "*he* ;"

but would it not remove this doubt if we consider that the Comforter was to be henceforth the prominent divine Teacher, and was clothed with such power as to be able to convert three thousand on the first day of his manifestation.

This influence was also to continue and increase till the whole world should be renovated. The Comforter was to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." The pronoun used fitly expresses this personal agency.

SEC. II. — *Prayer to the Comforter. Analogy of Wind, &c.*

Again : it is said that such a view makes it improper to direct prayer to the Comforter ; for we cannot pray to a merely personified action. But there is a great difference between a *merely personified action*, and that personified action in which are incorporated both the Father and Son. Can it be improper to pray to such an Agent ? — to One in whose coming and influence they both come, as Christ said, "*We will come*," — we, in and through our joint working, will "abide with you forever."

In fact, we cannot pray to any one of the three persons without praying to them all. If we pray to the Father, we pray to the Son and the Spirit. If we pray to the Son, we pray to the Father and the Spirit. If we pray to the Spirit, we pray to the Father and the Son. We may have either or all in our mind : it amounts to the same.

Here the analogy of the human constitution is

again applicable. We cannot approach a man's soul without approaching his body, nor his body without including his soul; yet the two are distinct. The soul is not the body, nor the body the soul; but in their union they make one being. Apply this principle to prayer to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, and all becomes clear.

The best emblem, however, of the personification of this united agency of the Father and the Son is found in the words of Christ to the Jewish ruler; and we desire ever to accept his infallible teachings. He compares it to the wind: "The wind bloweth where it listeth," &c. (John iii. 8). The wind is one of the most powerful agents in nature. Its power is seen in uprooting trees, demolishing buildings, &c. But what is the wind? What else but the atmosphere in motion? There is no wind while the atmosphere is still; it is perfectly harmless. But let it be in motion, and there is wind; and according to the velocity of the *movement* there is more or less wind. It is the atmosphere moving, therefore, that we seem to personify as "wind." But is the wind a person because thus personified? Is wisdom a person because Solomon personified it? On the same principle, is God's movement by his Son through the Old Testament ages a person because this is sometimes personified to make it more clear to our comprehension? Might we not as properly call the wind and wisdom persons because they have been personified?

It is difficult to see the propriety or reason for denominating any movement of God a person prior to the Pentecost.

But Jesus had authority not only to give his Father's movement a significant name, but also to constitute it a distinct person, and as such appropriate to him a prominent place in the economy of man's redemption. And this he did in that instructive address, at his last passover, saying, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you *another Comforter*, that he may abide," &c., applying the masculine pronoun; which, if memory serves us, was never done before to God's movement.

Thus we have in the Comforter, who is "the Holy Ghost," *the third person* in the Trinity of the New Testament.

SEC. III. — *The Three Earthly Witnesses.*

From these witnesses in heaven, let us pass to those mentioned in the eighth verse: "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit and the water and the blood: and these three agree in one." The sixth verse may help us in obtaining information concerning these witnesses.

It reads as follows: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Here we learn who this first witness in earth is, viz., the Comforter; for Jesus, speaking of the Comforter, says, "When he, *the Spirit of truth*,

shall come, he shall guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 13).

The first, then, of the earthly witnesses is the Spirit of truth, or the Comforter. It will be remembered that the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is the last-mentioned of the three witnesses in heaven, but the first of the earthly three. Why the last then, and the first now?

Because, when the three witnesses testified at Christ's baptism, the Holy Ghost, then appearing as a dove, served a merely temporary and incidental purpose, and should strictly be classed with previous manifestations, such as the horses and chariot of fire that carried up Elijah, the pillar of cloud and fire that led Israel, the star that guided the Magi, and the spirit that taught the prophets. All these, with others, were God's special manifestations for special objects, not connected with any distinct personality.

But on the day of Pentecost this Holy Ghost receives not only a new name, but a new assignment, or official position, viz., to be expressly the great divine Teacher on earth. "He shall guide you into *all truth*," said Jesus, implying, "You are to have no other divine Teacher: my Father in heaven, and I at his right hand, by our influence, under the new name of THE COMFORTER, will come and make our abode with you, and finally subdue the world unto ourselves."

At the Baptism, then, the manifestation being only specific and transient, while after the As-

cension the Holy Ghost's relation was to be a universal and permanent one, it was proper and expressive that the dove (or Spirit) should be mentioned as the last of the witnesses on the former occasion, and the first in the latter.

Again : the manifestation at the Baptism was the last of the series of the former class ; but in the new dispensation the Spirit was to be pre-eminently the Guide and Teacher. Hence at the Baptism he would properly stand as the last witness ; and the first, when spoken of as connected with the new order of things, the Dispensation of the Spirit.

We may appeal to the Church for the correctness of the conclusion that the Comforter is now the sole divine Teacher in spiritual things. What does any man know of the kingdom of God, unless he is taught by this divine Instructor ?

We address those who have been "born of the Spirit." "The natural man," we know, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

Every person, therefore, will remain ignorant of this kingdom, and, indeed, ignorant of his own moral state, until enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. In vain do we look elsewhere for this kind of instruction. Much of God's general government may be learned from his word and his works ; but we must be taught by the Spirit in order to know anything of his spiritual kingdom.

Now, with this idea in mind, let us look at the three earthly witnesses. The character of the first of these has been noticed ; and he is the *principal* witness, since, as will be seen, the other two witness under him. And how does he witness "in earth," that is, to men, since witnessing to them is the only way he can witness "in earth" ?

Just as the Saviour said he would : " He shall convince of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

Is not this precisely what he has been doing ever since the day of Pentecost ? How effectually he performed this work on that memorable day ! And he has been doing the same down to our time.

He convinces every one to whom he comes of sin, showing him to be a condemned sinner, helpless in himself, and leading him to say in his heart, if not with his lips, " What shall I do ? " Just at this point the man is prepared to listen to the two other witnesses, — the water and the blood. Though two, their testimony is one and the same ; for John says, " They agree in one." It will be remembered that " Christ came, not by water only, but by water and blood." The water alone not being deemed sufficient, the " blood " is added.

The water evidently referred to his baptism. Though his baptism had nothing to do, intrinsically, with our redemption, yet it had its place, — first, as an initiation into the church militant ; and, secondly, as an emblem of his death. Paul

makes it a prominent emblem. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized *into his death*? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into *death*" (Rom. vi. 3, 4).

The blood, or the shedding of blood, is the death. This is a common use of the word in the New Testament. The blood of Christ is his death. We have, then, in these two last witnesses, the emblem of his death, and the death itself. The emblem alone was not sufficient to show his death: "not by water only." The "blood," the third witness, must confirm the testimony of the emblem; "and these three agree in one," viz., that men have broken God's law, and are condemned. This the first witness teaches, and, with the help of the other two, shows that there is redemption through the atonement made by the death of Jesus Christ. The first witness, as we have said, is the Teacher; the other two witness under him. He Himself shows man his condition, and then, by the other two, the way of release.

"Jesus died, and paid it all, — all the debt I owe."

SEC. IV. — *Combined View of the Six Witnesses.*

Let us dwell a moment longer on these six witnesses. The first three proclaim the man Jesus to be the Son of God, and then return again into heaven. They do not profess to set forth the great errand on which he came: that was left for the three earthly witnesses. When the work of re-

demption was completed, this great, final Teacher comes, and by and in the last two earthly witnesses applies the redemptive grace to and in men.

Does not this seem wonderful? and the whole is the provision of our heavenly Father, that we might escape the consequences of transgression. None but God could have devised such a plan; and none but the God-man, with the Comforter to apply the whole, could have consummated it. Again we adopt Paul's language to the Romans: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"

These verses have been the longer dwelt on, for the reason that some writers have clung to the seventh as proof of an original Trinity in the Godhead. Let the reader turn again to this fifth chapter of John's first Epistle, and read from the sixth to the thirteenth verse. Notice the object of the writer, and see if anything, even a word, favors the idea that the apostle was thinking of an eternal Trinity in the Godhead. Is he not treating wholly of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men? Let him judge, too, whether our observations do not accord with the writer's aim. Can any one believe that he would turn aside from his grand object, and carry his reader back into an illimitable eternity, and set him to scanning a subject which neither he nor any one else could understand? No: his theme was too important, and his time too valuable to be thus thrown away.

We are well aware that doubts are expressed as to the genuineness of these verses, more especially the seventh, and that much has been written on both sides of the question. But, irrespective of their absence in important manuscripts, we believe them to be John's writing for the following reasons :—

1. They are in good keeping with John's usual manner of expression.

2. They form a connection with the preceding sixth verse, and with the following ninth, tenth, and eleventh verses.

3. They are just what John needed to establish his doctrine ; and we think them most happily and cogently introduced at this very point. What stronger testimony could he have ? The eternal God, on two occasions, declares Jesus to be his " beloved Son ;" next, the Son, by word and by miracle, asserts this title for himself ; then, that the highest number of witnesses required by the law might not be wanting, the Spirit, in the form of a dove, alights and " abides on him." What testimony could be more worthy of trust ? John refers to it as of the most conclusive character. " If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." To what other witness of God could he refer than the above-named ? These witnesses have been, still are, and ever will be, essential to the strength of the Church ; and neither as a body nor in her individual members can she dispense with them.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSEQUENCES TO THE CHURCH OF THE
FOREGOING VIEWS.

Now what would be the consequences were the views which have been advanced to be generally accepted ?

SEC. I. — *Would the Church be a Loser ?*

First, what would the Church lose, if, surrendering the idea of an eternal divine Son, she should accept the conclusions herein presented ? We have carefully examined this question, and cannot see that there would be the smallest loss. On the contrary, there would seem to be much gain. She would still have, as before, her eternal God. She would still have a Son of God of the same attributes and possessions with God the Father. Would it add anything to him if he were eternal ? He was begotten of God : God could not beget him a God from all eternity. The most He could do would be to unite him to Himself. This would place him on an equality with Himself ; and what more than this could the Church have in the Son ? She would have a complete Saviour in this Son, who has made a perfect atonement for her and for all men if they will accept it. She has the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, including Father and Son, to teach

the nature and things of the divine kingdom. She has a Trinity, perfect, divine, rational, whose existence and application she can contemplate with pleasure and profit. We cannot see that the position taken conflicts with any of the doctrines of the Church essential to the salvation or elevation of man. It does not, properly speaking, interfere with any of the existing denominational distinctions in the Christian church. In fact, it goes far towards reconciling them. The Trinitarian can remain such, since in every just sense a Trinity is preserved. The Unitarian may still hold to the fullest conviction of the Unity of God ; since, according to the positions herein set forth, Deity is *one and the same eternally*. What evil, then, would follow, unless it be an evil to give up long-cherished opinions which have no basis in the inspired Word?

SEC. II. — *What would the Church gain?*

On the other hand, what would be gained?

First, as remarked by Dr. Watts ("Glory of Christ," p. 203), treating on the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ. He says, "This doctrine casts a surprising light on many dark passages in the word of God : it does very naturally and easily explain and reconcile several difficult places, both in the Old and New Testaments, which are very hard to be accounted for in any other way."

Take, for instance, the first two verses in John's Gospel, on which we have commented. The usual

interpretation seems to involve this passage in needless mystery. The mind involuntarily fixes on two beings. There is the Word which "was with God." We defy any one to explain this on the generally received doctrine of the Son. If the Word was God from all eternity, and there was also God the Father with whom "the Word was," we cannot efface from the mind the idea of two Gods.

Again : take the words of God in the second Psalm, to which also we have referred : "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee : ask of me," &c. We will suppose at a certain period God had begotten or brought into existence the Logos or Son ; and he now informs this Son of his origin, and his relation to him : we would ask, What words could the Father use that would convey this information better and more directly than those recorded by the Psalmist ? Look at that short paragraph ; how concise and God-like ! — the almighty Father addressing this new-born, "only-begotten Son" (perhaps, before the union), and declaring to him he was *his* son, and pledging to him a pre-eminence. How this harmonizes with the words of Jesus ! — "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands" (John iii. 35). "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24).

Now, if there is a doctrine fully supported by Scripture, of which it cannot be said, "It is made up of mysteries which no one even attempts to

explain," would it not be gain to the Church to adopt this in place of one confessedly mysterious?

True, there are mysteries in the kingdom of God as well as in Nature. *How* God united a created being with himself, so that both should possess the attributes and sympathies of each, we do not know, as before said, though we are assured of the fact by the testimony of Jesus. The manner in these and many other dealings of God is among "the secret things which belong to God;" but the facts are among the things revealed, which belong to us.

Again: these views of Christ and of his union with the Father bring the doctrine of the Trinity within the reach of our faculties. It is no longer a mysterious idea beyond our capacity, but a doctrine to be practically apprehended by the believer. It will be seen that the unity and personality of God the Father are herein strictly maintained without any imaginary division of his essence, and also the personality of the Son as in himself a distinct being.

It has been shown, also, in what sense personality is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. We believe in the personality of the three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and it is easily seen that without mystery they are one.

These are Bible terms; and our design is to follow strictly the obvious intention of the writers of the sacred volume. But that book does not teach that the three existed in the Godhead from

all eternity ; that is human theory. On the contrary, it teaches that the Trinity was brought in with the completion of the economy of salvation.

Further : not the least benefit to be derived from these views will be found in the simple, unobstructed channel, or "way," as Jesus calls it, to the one eternal Jehovah, with no other mediation than that of the man Jesus, our elder brother. Since he is one with the Father, in approaching him we approach the Father, as he tells us in John xiv. 6 : "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

How elevating the thought that our facilities of access to this Elder Brother so far exceed those of the people when he was in the flesh !

We need not go to Jerusalem or Nazareth or Capernaum, or any other place, to find him ; but wherever we are, on land or sea, in the palace or in the dungeon, we can come to the same Man to whom the leper said, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean ;" the same from whom virtue went out to heal the woman who touched the hem of his garment. Yes, to this same Jesus (the only difference being that his body is now transformed into a spiritual body) we can come as familiarly as any who sought him when on earth, and with the advantage, also, of knowing that in addressing him we address the eternal God his Father.

Is not the thought sublime, that we, imperfect creatures, naturally estranged from our beneficent Father, are brought near through our Elder Brother

Jesus, and can hold communion with the Father, and tell him all our wants, as really and as readily as we could to our natural brother? Let us keep in mind that it is the one eternal God, his and our Father, whom we thus approach; not an eternal Son: we know no place for, nor need of such a son. We have free and complete access to God the Father through our Brother Jesus. What can we ask or wish for more?

Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to *my* Father and *your* Father; to *my* God and *your* God" (John xx. 17). Here the man Jesus places himself on a perfect equality with his disciples. He calls them "brethren," and affirms that God was his Father and his God, as really as He was their Father and their God. And, as to his *humanity*, in itself considered, he was on an equality with them, and just as dependent; but we remember that this Brother is so united to God as to be one with him in so close connection, that whatever we say to him we say to the infinite Jehovah. The thought seems well-nigh overwhelming. We wonder not that we read, "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him;" for it is plain that in worshipping him they would worship the Father in him. Was not this a proper demand when this complex person, Father and Son united in one, descended from heaven, and took upon Him a human body prepared for Him? And a suitable tenement it was

for such a personage,—generated by the Holy Ghost, born of the blessed virgin. Surely a fit incarnation for such a being, in order to dwell with men on earth!

And now we have in Christ Jesus, not only literally what was said by the prophet some seven hundred years before the event, “Emmanuel,” God with us; but more,—GOD ONE OF US.

Was it strange that at such an advent the angels should sing, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men”? Think for a moment who this being was, thus announced from heaven: no less than the Creator of the world. Is it not astonishing, when all this was for man’s benefit, that he should be so slow to respond to such an annunciation? And how appropriate is the language of Isaiah when applied to this personage!—“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, The MIGHTY GOD, The EVERLASTING FATHER, The PRINCE OF PEACE” (Is. ix. 6). How wonderfully we see all these combined, literally, in the babe of Bethlehem!

But this could not be said of him were he an eternal Son. How could such a Son be called “The Everlasting *Father*”? How different was Jesus’ own teaching!

Again: how these views tend to exalt the human race! That the Infinite Jehovah should himself be united, not “to a divine Son,” but to one of our

own species, the first-begotten Son ; and coming with him into our world, with and in him be united to a human body, also of his own begetting, and in that body dwell on earth as one of us, — what wonderful condescension and mercy ! In view of the sublimity of this subject, we can exclaim with the apostle, "Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh." *

Once more. *These views effectually undermine and completely demolish the arguments mainly relied on against the divinity of Jesus Christ :* for he possessed all that God possessed. This is abundantly shown in the New Testament. If therefore there is divinity in God, and Christ possessed all that is in God, he must possess the same divinity. This is one of the principal points of this little work, to show that the divinity of the One eternal God is the divinity and the only divinity of Jesus Christ. Instead therefore of detracting in the least from the divine character of the Saviour, he is exalted above measure, in that he is made equal with God. Therefore "all men should honor the Son *even* as they honor the Father."

We have aimed to show that the doctrine of an eternal divine Son is not found in the Bible. We have also aimed to show, from Scripture authority, who the Son of God is, and what constitutes his divinity. How far we have succeeded, the reader must judge. A writer in "The Edinburgh Review," discussing a certain tenet, says, "Whoever

* Marginal reading.

finds it in the New Testament must first put it there." So say we of the doctrine of an eternal divine Son. We know that, like many other prevailing opinions, it is imagined to be there ; but, from the obvious meaning of the writers of that book, we are unable to discover it.

SEC. III. — *Views of Dr. Watts and others.*

It is well known that the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ is no new doctrine. It was taught many centuries ago. When it was first promulgated, we are unable to say. It was advocated by men of high standing in the Church in the early part of the eighteenth century. The learned and pious Dr. Watts, after much examination, embraced and ably defended it. He wrote a special work on the subject, entitled "The Glory of Christ." He shows from the Scriptures that the human soul of Christ actually existed before the creation of the world, and that the creating or begetting of it was the first act of God of which we have any knowledge. He shows, further, that God so took this soul of Christ into union with himself, that the two beings became in this way one. As would naturally happen, we have been led to use, in setting forth our views, much the same Scriptures as those to which he refers.

But we must be allowed to say that it was more than three years after our own mind was settled on this subject, that we first learned that Dr. Watts or any other person (except one private individual)

ever held such a view. When, providentially, Dr. Watts's book fell into our hands, we were surprised at the coincidence of our ideas with his concerning Christ's pre-existence and union with the Father. Eventually we saw that these views conflicted with the received doctrine of the Trinity. For, if the human soul of Christ was the "first-begotten" Son of God, then there could have been no eternal first-begotten Son ; and if no eternal Son, there could not be an eternal Trinity. After much examination, comparing Scripture with Scripture, we were compelled to adopt the views herein set forth.

Then, with respect to the third person in the Trinity, we found ourselves in a somewhat similar embarrassment. We saw that in the Comforter Christ had instituted a person, whom he called "*another*." We saw that if there were already three persons in the Godhead, and Christ instituted another Person under the name of the Comforter, then we could not see how to avoid the conclusion that there would be a fourth person in the so-called Trinity. On diligent search, as in the other cases, we could find no scriptural ground for believing in an eternal third person in the Godhead ; or in any third person at all, before the coming of the Comforter. There had been, indeed, various manifestations of God ; but we could see no propriety in attributing to them a personality. We were obliged to abandon the idea of an eternal Son, also that of an eternal third person, and be content with

the teachings of the sacred volume. We find in this all that man needs.

A word more about Dr. Watts. We could not learn that he ever relinquished the doctrine of an eternal Son in the Godhead. Yet he must have seen that his views of Christ's pre-existence were in direct conflict with that doctrine; for, if the created human soul of Christ was the Logos who was with the Father at the beginning, and was the Son by whom God made the worlds, he could not be an eternal Son; and if there was no eternal Son, then there was no eternal Trinity.

That, we think, was his difficulty. He had taught the common doctrine of the Trinity in prose and song. He also very clearly and scripturally advocated the other doctrine as to the nature of Christ. The two doctrines, of course, could not both be true; and yet he stood as the advocate of both. It is not to be wondered at that, as some have said, "his mind was unsettled."

The Unitarians claimed him as having given up Trinitarianism and embraced their views. On the other hand, it was said he had relinquished his views with regard to the pre-existence of Christ's humanity. Rev. S. Palmer, the author of *Memoirs of Watts and Doddridge*, who claimed to possess his latest writings, denies this report, showing the contrary from documents of Dr. Watts. The probability is, that he was re-examining the whole subject when his Master called him up higher.

We have no evidence that what we have sug-

gested were the difficulties in the doctor's mind ; but it is quite evident that in his latter days he was troubled on these points : and that he should have been so is not surprising. The impassioned prayer found among his papers after his decease, showed the state of his mind. We well remember the morass we had to wade through when compelled to give up a doctrine cherished as fundamental in the evangelic Church, and one to which we subscribed when uniting with the church militant. But we had pledged ourselves to follow the Saviour in our doctrinal views as well as in practice, so far as we could understand his teachings ; and this we trust we have done. Accordingly, we gave up the doctrine of an eternal divine Son ; also that of an eternal third person ; and consequently, that of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, whether real or supposed. In place thereof, we accept a present, active, comprehensible Trinity, such as the Saviour and the apostles appear to us to present, — a Trinity which finds its final and complete expression in the person and work of the Comforter. This is a Trinity which we can not only understand, but whose value and power we can feel, — a Trinity of practical use to man.

Several eminent divines, about the time of Dr. Watts, embraced the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul ; but that any one of them took the ground that there was no Trinity in the Godhead, we could not learn. This latter seemed to be too near Arianism and modern Unitarianism

to be accepted. Though this pre-existence was firmly believed by some of the most pious and able divines to be a doctrine of the Bible, it was allowed for the time to sink into neglect.

The learned and pious Bishop Fowler of Gloucester said, in a treatise on the pre-existence of Christ's humanity, "There is no Christian doctrine more clearly delivered than this, and even by the Saviour himself, and often repeated by him ; and there is not more plain and undeniable evidence for any one article of faith than for this doctrine ; and that this is the sense in which, most certainly, the disciples of our Lord understood his declarations." Can any one examine the teachings of the Saviour and the writings of the apostles on this point, and come to any different conclusion ?



CHAPTER IX.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

SEC. I. — *Point at Issue.*

WE now call attention to several passages of Scripture, most of which have not been quoted in these pages, but which have a direct bearing on the subjects under consideration ; and, that the force both of the passages themselves and of our remarks upon them may be more distinctly seen,

we will state what we understand to be the common doctrines of the evangelical Church on these points, adducing in contrast therewith our own views.

We understand the long-cherished doctrines of the Church to be these: First, that the Supreme God is one eternal, underived being. Second, that He exists in three persons (or manifestations or distinctions; for herein there is diversity of opinion; though all claim that, in some sense, he is *three*, viz., Father, Son, and Holy Ghost); and that these three, all equally eternal, constitute his being, and are the first, second, and third persons in a divine Trinity. Third, that about four thousand years after the creation, the Father sent this divine Son to earth, where he united himself with Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem; and that this union of the eternal Son with the human child made the child divine, and constituted the Christ. Not that it transformed the humanity of Jesus into divinity, but constituted him divine as well as human.

Such is the general belief; though some who are reputed orthodox may partially dissent.

It will now be attempted to show that there is no evidence that the sacred writers held or designed to teach the idea of an eternal divine Son, or an eternal Trinity, or any "third person in the Trinity" at all, until the Comforter, promised by Jesus, was manifested at Pentecost; but rather that these writers set forth a human Son made divine by union with his Father, and a Trinity of the

Father, the human-divine Son, and the Holy Spirit as personified "the Comforter" after Christ's ascension.

A word further before proceeding with our quotations. We do not consider that a belief in either of these schemes of doctrine is essential to salvation, or that clearly-defined views as to the character and atonement of Christ are indispensable in order to enter into life. Cornelius, evidently, had no distinct views of Christ as a Saviour; yet he was undoubtedly a pious man, and an heir of heaven, before Peter preached to him the way of redemption through Christ. The eloquent Apollos was unquestionably a Christian, before Aquila and Priscilla "expounded to him the way of God more perfectly." Very few Christians have an understanding of the plan of redemption, when first adopted into the family of God. It is a cause of gratitude that the way of eternal life is level to the capacity of every person. It is simply to repent and to accept the offered Saviour.

SEC. II.—*John the Harbinger, and Christ with Nicodemus.*

To examine the testimony of Scripture, it is not necessary to quote the passages consecutively as they stand in the New Testament.

John i. 15: John [the harbinger] bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he *was before me.*" (See also the

30th verse.) Then in verse 18, before referred to, he says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is [or was, as explained by some] in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He says further (verses 32, 34), "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." On whom did the Spirit abide? Was it not on the man Jesus, whom John had just baptized? And was it not that same man of whom John bears record "that *this* is the Son of God"? Should any one say that John in these verses refers to a divine Son united with the man Jesus, we beg to ask him where he gets this information. To the same purport is verse 36, where John, looking upon the man Jesus as he walked, saith, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

Again: in the memorable conversation with Nicodemus, in the third chapter of this Gospel, Jesus says (verse 13), "No *man* hath ascended up to heaven, but he *that came down from heaven*, even the *Son of man*, which is in heaven." Several writers have seized on the clause, "The Son of man which *is in heaven*," as proof of the independent divinity of Christ, arguing that, as a man on earth, he could not be in heaven at the same time, and that he must therefore refer to his divine nature, in which, as God, he fills immensity, and can thus be at once both in heaven and on earth. It may be remarked that the divinity of Jesus,

which is all along admitted, yea, insisted on, would give him omnipresence, as well as all power, and all attributes of God ; but that this implies inherent, or independent divinity, is quite another thing.

But do not these writers forget that it is the *Son of man* who is said to be in heaven, and that this title *always* includes the humanity, and generally means the humanity *alone*?

Further : in the eighteenth verse of the first chapter, just quoted, the harbinger calls this *Son of man* "the only-begotten Son ;" and it has been already shown that the only-begotten Son was that human soul which was "the beginning of the creation of God." The name "Son of man," here given him, seems to confirm this position. Now, if the phrase "is in heaven" may, as some maintain, properly read "*was* in heaven," the sense is clear. The context and natural import favor this rendering.

This thirteenth verse is evidently a confirmation of what was said in the eleventh, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Now, to justify this declaration, Jesus says to his inquirer that no man on earth, except himself, could declare what he *had seen and heard* in heaven ; for the reason that no other man had been there.

It will be remembered that Nicodemus, from the first, recognized him as "a teacher come from God." Jesus talks with him as a man to a man, and uses his common title, the "Son of man." We do not

suppose he understood exactly how Jesus was a teacher come from God, though he believed it was so : yet we insist that the words of Christ very clearly explained to him the fact. The Son of man, the person then talking with him, had been in heaven, had come down thence, had assumed the human body, and in that body was now telling him what he had seen and heard in the heavenly world. He only could give such testimony. Is not this the natural import of the language which he uses ?

We have also in this third chapter further testimony of Christ, from John the Baptist. Let the reader turn to this chapter, and read from the twenty-seventh verse to the end, that he may be the better prepared to judge of the correctness of our remarks on some of these verses. "He that cometh from above is above all : he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath *seen* and *heard*, that he testifieth " (verses 31, 32). We have before referred to this passage, but adduce it here as intimately connected with the whole paragraph to which we are calling attention. Its close agreement with the above-quoted declarations of Christ to Nicodemus will not escape notice. Both speak of what the Son of man saw and heard in heaven.

Here, and in several of the preceding and following verses, the harbinger is evidently showing the contrast between himself and Christ *as two men*. He was "of the earth," that is, born only here.

“He that cometh from above,” that is, begotten or born in heaven, and come down to earth, “is above all.” He can tell what he saw and heard before he left heaven.

We quote also verses 34, 35: “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” Let the reader carefully ponder these verses, comparing the last two with those just before cited, and then judge for himself whether the following remarks are well founded.

We have said that it involves, if not impropriety, at least confusion of thought, to speak of God the Father as *sending* God the Son. And how could it be said that God the Father *giveth* not to God the Son the Spirit by measure; that is, by limit? Would not the Son, if inherently God, “of the same essence as the Father,” have always possessed the same measure of the Spirit as the Father? How, then, is the Spirit *given* at all, if the alleged receiver already has all that the giver possesses? Does not the expression, “giveth the Spirit,” necessarily convey the idea of two distinct beings, one bestowing and the other receiving? Can we possibly get any other idea from the expression? This passage accordingly represents the Son as destitute of the Spirit, except as bestowed on him by the Father, and agrees with what Christ declared, that “the Son can do nothing of himself,” showing that

he was impotent as to any divine power, save as he received it from the omnipotent Father.

Here, again, we see how well John the harbinger and Christ agree. John declared, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." Christ says, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine" (John xvii. 10); and, "All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). John says again (verse 35), "The Father *loveth* the Son, and hath *given* all things into his hand." What meaning is there in this, if applied to God the Father and a Son in himself divine?—God the Father *loving* God the Son, of the same essence with himself. God loves God,—the Being loving and the Being loved the same: this would indeed be mystery. On this ground, why not with all propriety reverse the order, and say, "God the Son loveth God the Father, and hath given all things into his hand"? Both, in the supposition, are literally and absolutely God; neither, then, is superior or inferior. Otherwise they form two beings; in which case one could not be in himself God. If this be admitted, the belief in an eternal divine Son at once disappears.

If the reader will take the language of Nicodemus as literally true, that the man Christ was a "teacher come from God;" if he will allow that God, literally his Father, took the Son into union with himself, dwelt in him on earth, and worked with and through him his mighty works,—he will find all the above-quoted passages, and the prayer

in the seventeenth of John, natural and easily understood.

SEC. III. — *John* v. 23 ; vi. 46.

John v. 23: "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." This passage is often adduced in proof of Christ's inherent divinity. The argument is, that, "as the Son is of the same essence as the Father, he of course deserves equal honor." The passage certainly *is* evidence of divinity in Christ ; but is it evidence of inherent divinity ? Does such an idea accord with the other teachings of Christ ? Does he not often assert the inferior position of the Son, and that the ground of his superiority lies in his union with the Father ? — not with a divine Son, but "the Father that dwelleth in me," as though he would say again, "I and my Father are one." This is the reason why "all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father," and why "he that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father." The thought is, that the way to honor God is to honor him in Christ. In the immediately preceding verse he says, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," showing that the Father authorizes and empowers the Son. Paul in his speech at Athens says, "God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that man* whom he hath ordained." Was not "that

man," thus referred to, the Son, to whom God "hath committed judgment, and whom all should honor even as they honor the Father"? If it was an eternal divine Son, Paul makes a most serious mistake in calling him a "man." Take, however, Jesus' own words, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," and grant that the two, by virtue of this union, are one, and there is no discrepancy between him and Paul, and no difficulty in understanding them.

Yes: it was "that man," our Elder Brother, and your brother, dear reader, if you have faith in him, to whom all judgment has been committed; and Paul was right in telling the Athenians that they, with all the rest of the world, were to be judged by "that man whom He hath ordained." How consoling the thought that our Brother, who is also our Redeemer, is to be our Judge! Whom else could we desire?

John vi. 46: "Not that any *man* hath seen the Father, save he which is of God: he hath seen the Father." Christ here speaks of himself as a man like other men; and we detect no reference to a divine nature; no *man* (and he speaks of men generally) save himself alone, who is directly, soul and body, of God. Now, it is certain that neither he nor any other man could see God by natural vision; for "God is a Spirit;" and spirit can be seen by no bodily eye. Jesus, then, in order to have seen the Father, must have existed *as a man* in a different state from that in which he then was; and

what could it have been but his pre-existent state? We claim this to be a fair deduction from the premises. Alone it may not be conclusive; but in connection with so many similar passages, and in the absence of a single item of evidence to the contrary, it would seem to be a strong confirmation of the view.

This passage harmonizes with, and helps to explain, Christ's words to Nicodemus, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have *seen*." In each instance he speaks as a man. Then, too, the expression "He which is of God" implies derivation from God, and is inapplicable to a divine Son unless we allow, which we cannot, an "eternal generation."

SEC. IV. — *The Bread from Heaven.*

John vi. 51: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

This was spoken in the discourse at Capernaum, from which the last-mentioned quotation was made. Many of the disciples said, "It is a hard saying;" and the Jews objected, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

The term "flesh" in Scripture has a variety of meanings. It often signifies humanity, or man, as including both soul and body. This seems to be the meaning in the passage under consideration. In giving his "flesh . . . for the life of the world,"

our Lord doubtless means that he would yield up his entire humanity, his soul and body, to bear the penalty of the divine law, for man's salvation. Now, by employing together the two figures, "flesh" and "bread" (or "manna"), our Lord represents what neither of these figures would express alone. The "flesh," as already said, points to the body and the soul of Christ, both of which were necessary in making a perfect offering, a complete atonement. "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (Isa. liii. 10). "A body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. x. 5). Now, as the body of Christ did not come down from heaven, though his soul did, the term "flesh" would not be the suitable one to express the idea of Christ's pre-existence. That would imply that body, as well as soul, had been in heaven. Hence the expression "bread [or "manna"] which came down from heaven" was used, as fitly declaring that the soul alone, the human soul of Christ, came down from heaven.

And to express the whole truth,—that is, both that Christ, as to his soul, came from heaven, and that he suffered and died in the body,—these two figurative expressions, "bread" and "flesh," are used together: "the bread that I will give is my flesh."

It was, then, the voluntary act of the humanity of Christ thus to come from heaven, to give himself for the life of the world. Hence they must eat his flesh, and drink his blood (which is the *life*: Gen. ix. 4); that is, in order to possess eternal

life, they must appropriate by faith the benefits purchased by his death. Neither his disciples nor the Jews understood him; how could they? for he was referring to the way of salvation through the atonement, which was not then completed. He sought to explain it to the disciples: but not till the day of Pentecost, when the new Teacher came and "guided them into all truth," was the matter made clear to them.

The whole discourse teaches us that in Christ alone is eternal life. The manna given to the Israelites was the emblem of this life. As the manna seemed to come from the visible heavens, so he (i. e., his humanity, in union with the Father, the spiritual manna or bread) came down from the true heaven to give life to the world.

SEC. V.—*Further Testimony of John.*

John vii. 28, 29: "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he sent me."

Let the reader consider well these verses, and then say if the language would naturally be used in relating a transaction between God the Father and a God the Son, of the same identical essence and will. Does not the whole representation point clearly to two beings with distinct wills? Especially the last declaration, "I am from him, and he sent me:" if this expression, in connection with the

many others quoted, does not indicate two beings and two wills, then we do not understand the force of words. We think, too, that any attempt to turn these passages from their plain and obvious meaning is an unwarranted use of the sacred writings.

John viii. 14, 23 : "For I know whence I came, and whither I go ; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go."

"Ye are from beneath ; I am from above : ye are of this world ; I am not of this world."

Were these declarations intended to convey the idea of a divine, eternal Son ? If we include such a Son here, what shall we do in the following twenty-eighth verse ?—where he says, "When ye have lifted up the *Son of man*, then shall ye know that I am he ;" that is, "I am this Son of man who was from above," who adds, "*I do nothing of myself* ; but as my Father hath *taught* me, I speak these things." If a divine Son is included here (we say it reverently), he is represented as a very inefficient being. He is impotent, can do nothing of himself. The far-fetched comment, that as the divine Son is of the same essence as the Father, he can do nothing separately from the Father, is an exposition of these and similar passages which fails to commend itself. The context and all Christ's teachings on this point preclude such an interpretation. The tenor of these passages taken together goes to show the inability of the person speaking to do anything of himself. He must be

taught by the Father *even what to speak*. He did not come into the world *of himself*, but was *sent*, as verse 42 shows.

Again: John xii. 49: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." Here is the same idea fully developed. Whoever is the speaker using this pronoun of the first person, he represents himself as altogether inferior to the Father, and subject entirely to his direction and control. Even if we suppose that the man Jesus, according to the common doctrine, was united to a divine Son, and, in all these passages, includes in himself the divine and the human, would not this seem a very improper use of language for the purpose? Would it not lead his hearers to think of him as another being, inferior to the Father? Does it not convey that idea to us?

John xiii. 3, 4: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper," &c. What can be the meaning of these words of John, unless they apply to the soul of Christ? Jesus was his human name, which in itself did not necessarily include the divine nature. There were many of that name among the Jews: in their language the name was "Joshua," a favorite name in all the tribes. It was the man Jesus who "went to God" from Mount Olivet; and was not this the same man that "came from God"?

He ascended in the same body which he took upon him at his birth in Bethlehem, this having been glorified, or transformed into a spiritual body from the morning of the Resurrection. But on special occasions, as when showing himself at different times to the disciples, he reassumed the visible, material body.

Does the name Jesus above include a divine Son? If so, it shows him to be dependent on and inferior to his Father, and receiving all he possessed from his Father. If the name includes only the humanity, then it was the humanity, and that only, that came from God.

In short, we cannot find, from anything that John says of Christ here or elsewhere, that he ever thought of him as united to an eternal divine Son. He makes his divinity consist in his union with the Father. He seems to us to have clearly understood this, and to have written with this thought in his mind. The other apostles appear to have had a similar understanding. We cannot doubt that the primitive disciples generally held the same view, so far as they had knowledge of Christ.

John xiv. 24, 28: "And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

We will not detain attention long on these verses. If the reader can understand the pro-

nouns "me," "I," and "my," here applied by Jesus to himself, as including an eternal Son equal to the Father, his capacity far exceeds ours. If language can be used to represent two beings, the one subordinate to the other, this language is certainly so used. If Jesus had said, "God who dwelleth in me is greater than I," whether it were the Father or the Son, no one would have doubted that the word "I" included only the humanity; and, if a divine Son was united to him, why did not Jesus say, "The Son who dwelleth in me is greater than I"? If there was such a Son, why is there not some allusion to him in Christ's preaching?

We must remind the reader not to mistake our position with regard to Christ, lest he suspect us of lowering the view of his character. We believe him to be verily God, and verily man,—man as to his human soul, begotten by the Father, and also as to his body, which was born of a woman; and God by virtue of a special union with his Father such as to make them one. The word Christ (the Anointed) includes both the Father and the begotten human soul, or God and man; and the begetting and union were before the creation of the world. "In the fullness of time" this complex being took a human body. Let the reader keep in mind these cardinal ideas while we proceed to notice a few additional passages.

John xv. 24: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had

not had sin ; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

If the man Jesus wrought his miraculous works by the aid of a divine Son, how had they seen and hated his Father? In that case they would have seen and hated Jesus and the divine Son ; for what they saw of God was in his works through Jesus : and would not Jesus rather have said, "they have seen and hated both me and the Son"?

John xvi. 27, 28 : "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." The disciples then said, "By this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

Can any one suppose that the disciples understood that it was a divine Son who came forth from God and united himself with the man Jesus? Was it Christ's intention that they should so understand him?

SEC. VI. — *The First-born.*

Col. i. 15-19 : "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature : for by him were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth : . . . all things were created by him, and for him : and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. . . . Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father

that in him should all fullness dwell." Here again, we see a confirmation of John the harbinger's expression, and from him we learn how the Son obtained this fullness : his words are, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

The passage under consideration has already been examined in part, for a special purpose ; but we wish now more fully to call attention to it.

This portion of the chapter is often cited as evidence of Christ's divinity ; and, in our view, it does, along with other scriptures, place that doctrine beyond controversy. But, quite generally, we believe, it is made to apply to a divine Son, united with the man Jesus, and called the second person in the Godhead. It is this reference to an eternal Son that we call in question. It is not easy to see how the pronouns and other expressions here used can apply to such a Son. The clause, "He was before all things," harmonizes with what has been before said on John i. 1. Indeed, Paul, in these five verses of the Epistle to the Colossians, as well as in other places, agrees perfectly with the explanation which has been given of the first eighteen verses of John's Gospel (see page 21). The declaration that "he was the first-born from the dead" certainly applies exclusively to the man Jesus, for divinity cannot die ; and is not this the same person as "the first-born of every creature," to whom belongs the pre-eminence in all things, of which Paul speaks ? How natural and rational this pas-

sage seems, viewed from the position herein maintained !

Heb. i. 6 : " When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

This harmonizes with the above ; and our only comment shall be the language of the second Psalm, " Thou art my Son : this day have I begotten thee." Do not the terms " first-begotten " and " begotten," in these two places, refer to the same person ? and does not the Psalmist declare a period *when* he was begotten ? Were the common theory correct, should not the Psalmist have written, " From eternity have I begotten thee " ?

1 Tim. iii. 16 : " Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest [manifested] in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

The best explanation of this verse is Christ's answer to Philip, John xiv. 9-11 : " Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father ?

" Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself : but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

" Believe me that I am in the Father, and the

Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

SEC. VII. — *The Son's Life is of the Father.*

John v. 26, 27: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

We must confess we see not how this passage can be so construed as to favor the generally received views of the Son of God. All will agree that *the* Son here mentioned is the Son of God. What, then, we ask, is the life which the Father hath in himself? It is answered, "Underived, eternal life."

It follows, then, that there was a period when the Son did not possess this life; for, had he always possessed it, the Father could not have *given* it to him. This life the Father *gives* to the Son so that he shall possess it as really and completely as Himself. Hence the eternal life which the Son had in himself must have been derived from the Father. Union with the Father would impart this, and with this all other things. "All things that the Father hath are mine" (John vi. 15). "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

In the above verses, again, two distinct beings are presented, each with his own will, the Father and the Son ; the Son inferior and subject to the Father, receiving from him eternal life, and authority to execute judgment, " because he is the Son of man."

This same Son, acknowledged by all to be the Son of God, says (verse 30), " I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; *because I seek not mine own will*, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." It may be said, " The divine Son, being God, can do nothing separately from God the Father ;" but, the added words, " as I hear, I judge," show this explanation to be erroneous. If he was of himself divine, from whom did he hear ?

Matt. iii. 17 : " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." To whom would John and the bystanders suppose this communication from heaven was intended to refer ? Was it not to the man whom John had just baptized ? So also in the case of the similar declaration when Jesus was transfigured. Was there anything in either of these announcements which would lead the hearer to think of an eternal divine Son ? There was in both a manifestation of the living God ; but it came from *the Father*, of whom Jesus speaks as *dwelling in him*.

Can any one see in the above any Son other than the man Jesus, the only-begotten Son ?

SEC. VIII. — *The Son's Efficiency that of the Father. Formula of Baptism.*

2 Cor. v. 19: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

Note, Paul says, "God was in Christ;" and this God, he repeatedly tells us, is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." In this he agrees with Christ, who often impressed on his hearers the great truth that *the Father was in him*. But never does he thus speak of a divine Son; and never does Paul thus speak. Paul often refers to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ as two beings. Rom. i. 7: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," is an example. These salutations and benedictions were, for a while, unintelligible to us. We could not see why he should make such a distinction between the Father and the Son; for we supposed the Son to be inherently God as well as the Father. But, when we came to understand that they were really two beings, who, though united, could be distinguished individually, our perplexity vanished. The benediction in the second letter to the Corinthians, in which the three persons in the New Testament Trinity are introduced, then became clear. Yet this benediction is often cited as proof of an *eternal* Trinity.

But it must not be forgotten that Christ had established the Christian Trinity nearly thirty years previous to Paul's writing that letter, at the time

when he promised the disciples that "another Comforter" should come after he should have been glorified. When, therefore, according to promise, He came on the day of Pentecost, the Trinity was completed ; and since the Trinity was comprised in the Comforter, who, as before shown, was to be thereafter the grand spiritual Teacher, how appropriate that He should be recognized in His full character, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by the apostles and all subsequent religious teachers !

When the three thousand were converted and made heirs of eternal glory by the operation of these persons in the Comforter on the occasion of his advent in his new position, how appropriate that these disciples should be baptized in the full name of this Trinity, thus recognizing each and all the divine agents by whom their spiritual transformation had been accomplished. Hence, in the formula of baptism appointed by Christ to be observed in all coming ages, the importance of using the names of the three persons composing this Trinity in the Comforter, in order to set forth the co-operation of the three in man's salvation.

And how could the apostles, when writing to the churches, do less than call the attention of the Christians, who had just emerged from heathen darkness, to this Trinity, especially having themselves made such advancement in the knowledge of Christ's kingdom through the teaching of this same agency ? It would naturally be their aim to introduce this subject on all proper occasions ; and

hence we find it so generally brought forward in their letters.

SEC. IX.—*Oneness of Christ with the Father.*

Phil. ii. 5-11 : " Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," &c. This is also one of the passages confidently relied on to prove the inherent divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Doubtless it does imply his divine character. But does it teach a native divinity? Does it not rather look towards a derived divinity? " Being in the form of God." But, if he were eternal, and of the very essence of the Father, he would in himself be God. How does it strike the mind to say that God was in the form of God? Does not the very expression, " in the form of," convey the idea of something less than God? On the other hand, if we assume that the apostle was speaking, as doubtless he was, of the Son, and that the Son was the man Jesus, possessing soul and body, then, as the Soul is spirit, and God is a spirit, we have in this soul the nearest approach to the form or image of God of anything of which we have knowledge. Again : " thought it not robbery to be equal with God." If the apostle had in mind a divine Son, it would hardly be proper to speak of him as " equal with God ;" for he would, even if united with the man Jesus, be verily God. There would be no equality in the case.

But, from the point of view we have taken, how naturally the whole passage reads. We behold a human Son in himself infinitely inferior to the Father ; but, by virtue of his union with the Father, "all things are given into his hands." He has them rightfully, and not by "robbery ;" and his Father, the giver, loses nothing by the bestowal. God makes the Son his equal by this blessed union. Who can contemplate this without being drawn in adoration and gratitude towards his heavenly Father, and without a new emotion of love to the beloved Son? What sublimity in this idea : the man Jesus, our Brother, was made equal with the eternal God ! Not only equal : he was made ONE with the incomprehensible Jehovah, — one with him in creation, one in the care and government of his people, one in the sojourn on earth, one in the rending of the tomb and the ascension, and he is one with him still in carrying on the work of redemption.

How perfectly this idea of Christ agrees with his description of the Comforter ! — God the Father, himself the Son, and their joint acting, personified the Comforter, — three in ONE.

SEC. X. — *Christ subject to the Father.*

1 Cor. xv. 27, 28 : "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the

Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Much ingenuity has been expended in the effort to harmonize this passage with the common theory of a divine Son; and quite to the satisfaction, no doubt, of the writers and many others. Whitby, as quoted by Scott, evinces here great ability, and to us seems more plausible than any other commentator we have seen. Thousands, doubtless, and among them Dr. Adam Clarke, have accepted his views. We have not space to give Whitby's arguments, and hence shall not attempt to meet them. In any discussion, it is important, first of all, that the premises be correct, otherwise no dependence can be put on the conclusions. Whitby at that time believed in the doctrine of an eternal Son. His efforts, therefore, were naturally directed to bring this passage into agreement with that theory. The reply is, We have no knowledge of such a Son. We have never heard of him except from sources not authoritative. The Son revealed to men is the first-born humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let this be borne in mind, and the passage needs no labored explanation. It explains itself, and means just what it obviously says.

The following seems to be the course of thought. When the wicked shall have been consigned to their place, and the righteous received into their everlasting habitations, and death swallowed up in victory, then Christ's mediatorial work *in redemption*, and in a governmental capacity, will of course

be completed ; but not, as is generally held, his *entire* mediatorial state. His mediatorial position will thenceforward be continued only in respect to worship. He will be the object through whom the Church triumphant will pay their adoration to the living God. There will be no separation of God the Father from his only-begotten Son : the redeemed will see and know God only in and through the Son. With the Father he will still receive the honors of the saints. This doubtless was expressed in one of those songs to which the exile in Patmos was allowed to listen : " Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb *for ever and ever*" (Rev. v. 13). The Lamb, we see, continues to have equal honors with him who sitteth upon the throne ; which confirms Christ's words : in heaven they do " honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

These meditations are offered as possibly a contribution to the understanding of this passage.

Matt. xxvi. 53 : " Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels ?"

The pronouns " I," &c., which Jesus thus applies to himself, can relate to him only *as a man* ; and they are generally so understood : and, as he uses them here in the same sense as elsewhere, it is a fair inference that they refer to his humanity, to the exclusion of any idea of divine sonship. He could not of himself command the army of angels, but must ask it of the Father.

Thus might we go on citing Scripture, and filling page after page, enlarging our little book, however, beyond its intended limit. We must stop somewhere; and it is believed sufficient evidence has been presented to satisfy a candid mind that the doctrine of an eternal divine Son is not taught in the Bible: and, if not, it is a doctrine which exists only in the human imagination.

SEC. XI. — *Practical View of the Divine and Human in Christ.*

Nor are we able to see any benefit to be derived from such a Son. The Bible, and, so far as we know, all God's dealings, are for the good of mankind. But of what advantage to the race is this alleged divine Son? We have, in Christ, literally a Son of God and Son of man, concerning whose origin we are instructed, of whom we can conceive, who is truly divine and truly human. We are taught also how he is divine and how he is human; and all, practically and so far as needful, is within the range of our faculties. We have this Son of man, divine on the very principle on which he has been held to be divine for the last fifteen hundred years; that is, BY UNION WITH GOD. The councils and the Church say, "By union with an eternal Son of God:" Christ says, "By union with God the Father:" and we prefer to follow Christ, rather than the fathers or councils.

On this point only arises our dissent respecting the divinity of the Son of man. But the difference

is quite essential: on it hinges the reality or non-reality of an eternal Trinity in the Godhead. But here, with many, lies an insurmountable barrier. "What!" say they: "have the fathers, the great scholars, the profound and far-seeing theologians of the past and the present, been laboring under error on this subject? This cannot be." So, too, former advocates of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul hesitated, not being prepared, on the one hand, to say that the doctrine of an eternal Trinity was erroneous, or on the other, that their views of Christ were not sufficiently supported. They found the Saviour's pre-existent humanity too plainly and repeatedly declared by himself to allow that to be seriously doubted. But they were not prepared to retract what they had said and written in favor of an eternal Trinity. Thus they were in a dilemma.

Occasion has been taken to refer to some of the alleged proofs of the eternal divinity of the Son, the insufficiency of which has been seen. It is evident that the doctrine of an eternal Trinity is inseparably connected with the alleged eternity of the Son. There is not the same direct evidence against an eternal Trinity as against an eternal Son; nor need there be; for, if there is no eternal Son, there can be no eternal Trinity.

Here let us pause, and glance again at some of the manifestations and doings of this complex being,—the Son in his union with the Father, previous to his advent. We find different names applied to him, such as "God," in the expressions,

"God created," "God said, Let us make man;" then as "Lord God," in speaking to Adam; then as "Lord," in addressing Cain. He is called "the God of Israel," "the Lord God of Israel," "the God of Abraham," "the angel of the covenant," "the messenger of God," "God of the prophets," &c.

He manifested himself now alone, as to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others; and now attended with angels, as to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, and to Jacob at Mahanaim. He assumed different appearances as occasion required. To Adam (probably), to Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, and others, he appeared as a man; to Moses as a burning bush; to Israel as a cloud by day, and as a pillar of fire by night; on Sinai as a dreadful fire, smoke, and sound of trumpet; then as a cloud resting on the tabernacle; and so on. He was not confined to any one name or appearance, or mode of communicating his will.

Now we behold this same complex being, divine and human, who created all things, who manifested himself under these various names and characters, and has interested himself in all the affairs of men, who has been worshipped and adored by every devout person from Adam to Mary "the mother of our Lord," — we see him at length clothed in flesh and dwelling on earth as one of the human family. But how few recognized in that helpless babe, in that carpenter's son, the Creator of the universe, the God of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah,

and of all his people ! Verily, he humbled himself and became obedient, eventually, unto death. But he was not without witnesses. Angels knew him, and were sent down to herald his coming.

Simeon, taught from above, hailed in him God's salvation. The wise men of the East, under the same guidance, came hundreds of miles to offer him their treasures. Led by "the star," they no sooner saw him than "they fell down and WORSHIPPED him." Why worship that infant child rather than any other ? We have no reason to think he differed in appearance from other children, or that he excited unusual attention except in those who were taught from above. They could see a reason for their homage ; for in him, the first-begotten Son, was the eternal Jehovah, whose companion the Son had been in his actions and intercourse towards man through all the ages. We would say, Let not only "all the angels of God," but all the inhabitants of earth, "worship him !"

It is not needful again to trace the Son in his early life. We find no manifestations of the divinity that was in him till his earthly powers were fully developed. His divinity being perfect, if it was to be manifested through humanity, the humanity should be perfectly developed. Hence he was in obscurity as to his divine character, till he had reached mature age. Then, after sanctioning by his example the rite of initiation into the Christian Church militant which he was about to establish, we see him "manifesting forth his glory," as

that same being, God and man, which he had been in the ages past ; the man, however, is now more prominently brought to view, having taken on the earthly body.

See him at Simon's table, dining with other men as one of them, and like them in outward appearance : hear him at the same table, as a God, saying to the weeping sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven." The Jews murmur, and exclaim, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" True, indeed ; and there, among them, *was* the eternal God the Father, united with his Son in the body. They, untaught by the Spirit, saw only the human person : he was to them but one like themselves. No wonder when, all at once, he assumed the divine prerogative, and pronounced forgiveness on one whom they knew only as an outcast, they broke into murmurs. How little did Simon and his guests imagine with whom they were dining ! Yet the penitent sinner knew. At least she knew sufficiently to lead her to throw herself, a suppliant, at his feet ; and she received from him a benefaction as much greater than the highest potentate of earth could confer, as the heavens are higher than the earth. The murmurings at Simon's table were no more surprising, however, than what is heard in our own day, when it is confidently asserted from some of our pulpits that this spiritual Healer was *only* a man.

But let us follow this *man* (for such he was) a little further. When crossing the lake, we find him in the stern of the boat, asleep, as any wearied man

might be ; but as soon as the affrighted disciples awake him, as God he speaks to the winds and waves, "Peace, be still ;" and immediately "there was a great calm." When he was with the sisters of Lazarus, and saw them and the Jews weeping, he also "wept" in sympathy ; but, at the grave, with the power of the Almighty, he said, "Lazarus, come forth." "And he that was dead came forth"

In these and most of his miracles, the God and the man are plainly distinguishable. His own explanation of all these mighty deeds we have so often given, that it seems superfluous to repeat that he refers all this power to his union with the Father, of whom he speaks as *dwelling in him* and *doing the works*. "I and my Father are one," — *Father*, let it be observed, not a divine Son. "The Father that dwelleth in me, *he* doeth the works." As if the Saviour said, "I as a man with you, and my Father the eternal God, are one ; and he through me doeth the works." "Therefore the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

Now, why may we not conceive of God as dealing with men in this same way, through this same agency, his Son, in the ages before the incarnation, as well as afterwards ?

Has the reader ever marked the beautiful coincidence between the narrative of the creation and the record of Christ's works ? "God said, Let there be light : and there was light." Christ said to the leper, "Be thou clean ;" and he was clean.

The cleansing of the leper was as really God's act as the creation of light. "God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear : and it was so." Christ said to the waters and the winds, "Peace, be still : " and it was so. God said, " Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit : and it was so." Christ said to the palsied man, " Arise, take up thy bed, and walk : " and he did so. " God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven : . . . and it was so." Christ said to the corpse of the young man of Nain, " I say unto thee, Arise : and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak."

We might proceed thus with regard to most of Christ's divine works in the flesh ; for " he spake, and it was done : he commanded, and it stood fast." No one will deny that it as truly required divine power to perform these works, as to perform the acts of creation.

If, now, we admit the force of Christ's own words, just as he spoke them and evidently intended they should be understood, and as they evidently were understood, at least by the apostles, — that he, the man Jesus, as to his soul, was " the beginning of the creation of God " (not " began the creation of God," as some would say), and that God the Father was " in him and he in God " " before the foundation of the world " (for if he was the beginning of God's creation, he must have existed before the world), — then all the rep-

representations in the Bible, from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelation, so far as they apply to God and Christ, their relations and works, are simplified, and made clear and comprehensible.

On the other hand, to maintain the doctrine of an eternally begotten Son, and an eternally personified Spirit, veils the whole in impenetrable mystery; and so far as concerns the Son, involves the subject (we say it with all due deference) in palpable inconsistency and self-contradiction.

A few words may be added on the doctrine of an eternal Trinity in the Godhead. Mark, it is an *eternal* Trinity to which we object: for, as already said, we believe and rejoice in the *Christian* Trinity, as instituted by Christ, and consummated in the blessed Comforter. But whence and through whom came the idea of an eternal Trinity? When did the Church accept this as one of her essential doctrines? So far as we can ascertain, it was not heard of in the first or second century. Admit that it has been firmly held for the last fifteen or sixteen hundred years. But does this establish its claim to be accepted as a doctrine in Christ's Church? It matters not that the Ecumenical Council of Nice, and the creed of the pious and world-famed Athanasius, assert it as a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith: we cannot accept it at their hands. With one bound we turn from them all, and would come directly to Him who spake as never man spake. We would sit down at

his feet, and, Mary-like, learn our religious creed from his lips, and from the men whom he personally instructed and inspired.

Allow us to quote a sentence or two from the Athanasian Creed, the main doctrines of which are commonly incorporated into Church Articles. "The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten : the Son is of the Father, alone, neither made nor created, but begotten." Does not this very language show that the Son was derived from the Father ? If we understand words, a begotten being is necessarily a derived being. Yet it is said that both are alike eternal. Such logic we cannot comprehend.

Look at this "mystical Trinity," as generally received, — three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one in the Godhead from all eternity ; and this, as supposed by some, is what John meant in his first Epistle, when he says that they "bear record in heaven." Record of what ? The reply is, "Of the doctrine that these three are one in the Godhead." We do not so understand it. But suppose it true : in what way does it practically affect us ? Suppose Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to have been one in the Godhead millions of years ago, having so remained to our day : what application can be made of this to our spiritual benefit ? Could it appear to us anything other than mystery ? We might, indeed, try to contemplate it ; but can we make it practical ? No : we need a Trinity of which we can form a rational idea, and

which we can apply to ourselves in the great matter of our salvation. Such a one we have from our blessed Redeemer; and we rejoice in it, and praise him for it.

SEC. XII. — *Christ's Union with the Father unlike the Believer's Union.*

It is maintained by some that the union of Christ with the Father is simply that union for which he prays in the words, "Neither pray I for these alone," — his immediate disciples, — "but for them also which shall believe on me through their word," — all later disciples, — "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John xvii. 20, 21). The next verse seems to refer to the future state: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

No doubt Jesus here prays for the oneness of his disciples; i. e., that they might be like him and his Father in being united in a spirit of love and purity. And it was just what might have been expected from Jesus, when praying for his brotherman. How could he have prayed for less, since he had enjoined on his disciples to be "perfect" as their "Father in heaven is perfect?"

But this is by no means that union of which we have been treating, — that union of which Christ speaks when he says, "I and my Father are one." For, were it so, why do not all Christians have the

power to work miracles, as he had, and those also whom he specially empowered ?

There is a oneness of the believer with Christ, which is secured by the faith of the believer in him. This faith unites him to Christ, so that by the economy of grace he inherits the promises in him, and becomes, according to Paul (Rom. viii. 17), an "heir of God, and *joint* heir with Christ." But the ground of this union being faith, the believer must have an *act* in it. If he does not exercise faith, there is no union. Not so in the union of Christ with the Father. The act of uniting was purely the act of the Father. The Son, a derived being, could have no more power to unite himself with the Father, or aid in thus uniting himself, than had his brother-man whom they had placed on earth. This uniting was as exclusively the act of the Father as the begetting. In the nature of things it could not be otherwise.

This union, also, of the Father and Son was such, that neither, within his sphere, would act without the concurrence of the other. Their wills were in perfect harmony. How often was it otherwise with the disciples in their relation to Christ ! He had occasionally to reprove them. "Ye know not what ye ask," "Ye know not what spirit ye are of," were his mild rebukes.

Again : as has been often remarked, whenever the apostles had occasion to refer to the power by which they wrought miracles, they always referred to Jesus Christ as that power. Now, if their union

with God was the same as Christ's, why did they not refer to God instead of Christ? Why did not Peter say to the crippled man, "In the name of *God*, rise up and walk"? We do not recollect a single instance in which they claimed divine power except through Christ. Nor do we find them claiming any union with Christ, or any power or authority from him, except through their faith in him. How very different the case with Christ! Though disclaiming any power independently of the Father, yet, in his union with him, he claims all the power his Father possesses. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). "All things that the Father hath are mine" (John xvi. 15). "All mine are thine, and thine are mine" (John xvii. 10).

In all this, faith in God, or any other condition of this union, is not once mentioned. Could the apostles in any such manner claim their union with Christ?

In John xiii. 13, he says, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Does he pray for such a union of the disciples with himself and the Father as would justify them in claiming these titles?

How would this agree with his instructions (Matt. xxiii. 8-10), where he warns them not to be called "rabbi," "master," or "father"?

In Luke vi. 46, he asks, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" He does not disapprove of their calling him Lord, but

of their not obeying him as such. Did he pray that the disciples might have authority to be called Lord?

When Paul affirms (1 Cor. xii. 3), "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," he implies that it is a divine influence which induces the soul to apply to him this title, — a pretty sure proof, we think, that he is Lord in a divine sense. Was it his prayer that his disciples should hold a similar position?

Further: to worship any other being than God, we know, is idolatrous and impious. Now it cannot be denied that Jesus, on several occasions while on earth, received worship, and that he administered no reproof to those who offered it.

How different the conduct of the apostles! When Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter, and worshipped him, Peter said to him, "Stand up: I myself also am a man." When the people at Lystra were about to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, they rent their clothes, and ran in amongst the people, crying out and saying, "Sirs, why do ye these things?" Thus, while Christ accepted worship as his right, the apostles rejected it as an impious service. Can any one imagine that Christ prayed that the disciples, like himself, might have such a union with the Father as should constitute a claim to receive worship?

Besides, Christ does not say that his disciples already are, he prays that they *may be*, one at a future time, just as he prays that they may be with

him and behold his glory, — referring clearly to future time : whereas the union of Christ with the Father was before the foundation of the world, and was such as to enable him, as has been seen, to take part in the creation. Paul writes to the Colossians that “he created all things that were created,” and again to the Hebrews, that “by him God made the worlds.” Did Christ pray that the disciples’ union with him should be such as to give them power to create worlds ?

We presume that all the apostles, after Pentecost, recognized God in Christ. If they applied to Christ, they applied to God. If they called on Christ, they called on God. But we do not suppose they generally understood in what way the man Jesus stood connected with God. It is doubtful whether Paul even, who was more thoroughly instructed in the principles of Christ’s kingdom than most of his brethren, had a full understanding of the manner of this connection, though clear as to the fact “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” And they all undoubtedly had a full conception of *the reality* of the union ; for the Comforter was to guide them into all truth ; and the reality, rather than the manner, of this union was the truth. God united a soul with the body of Adam : but he did not explain the manner of the union ; and it has not yet been discovered. John, however, evidently had clear views, both of the fact and the manner of the union of which we are speaking. He refers to it as a personal union,

by which the two became one; hence the fullness and clearness of his writings on the subject. No other sacred writer begins to exhibit so clear an understanding of it as does "the beloved disciple."

To conclude this topic: The apostles claim their divine power, and Christians their eternal life, from Christ, and through faith in him. Jesus claims his power and authority directly from his Father; not through faith in him, but through his perfect union with the Father. This is the distinct and essential difference between the union of Christ with his Father, and the union between the apostles and Christ and believers with each other.



CHAPTER X.

CLOSING REMARKS.

SEC. I. — *Comprehensiveness and Simplicity of the Divine Economy.*

It will not be disputed that the all-wise Deity had all the objects of his creation, all acts with their results, distinctly before him, prior to any movement towards that creation. That is, He had a perfect plan, relating to all creatures, things, and actions, from the creation to the close of time. In this plan were comprehended the creation, fall, and

recovery of man, who was to be the principal actor in the terrestrial drama.

And now, to commence with the movements of the Deity in carrying out this plan, it should be remembered that each movement is only a part in the great plan: and such acts only as are revealed in Scripture are to be considered.

The Almighty, then, foreseeing that man would use his volition to his own ruin, in wisdom provided a scheme for his restoration which should be an honor to Himself and his contemplated Son forever. This scheme was inaugurated by his begetting a being of the same nature and faculties of soul with the man he designed should be created and placed on the earth.

As the being first produced or begotten was called his Son, the Begetter would be Father.

But the Father saw that in order to meet all the objects for which this Son was brought into existence, he must possess perfect divinity. He saw He could unite him into such a oneness with Himself that it would invest him with all the attributes, powers, life, and indeed every nature and possession belonging to Deity, innate eternal existence only excepted. And were it possible to have imparted this also, it would add nothing to his faculties or character; for the oneness with his Father constituted him equal with his Father. If his Father be God, so must he also and equally be God. As the second movement in the great plan, the Father effected this Oneness; and when the Son came in

the flesh on earth he proclaimed, "I and my Father are *One*. Now this complex Being, two in one, is called in Scripture, God, Lord God, &c., &c.

This Being, in now further carrying out his plan, "moved upon the face of the waters," created light, made the firmament, created man, warned him against disobedience, and, after the fall, revealed to him the system of recovery in a promised Redeemer. This complex Being continued to perform all the divine operations recorded in the inspired word down to the Pentecostal day. From that time till the close of revelation we find in "The Comforter" the same complex Being, Father and Son. And in this interim between Pentecost and the close of revelation we find the same Being recognized in the divine movements, as in the Old Testament. A light shone around Saul "above the brightness of the sun," and a power accompanying it brought him and his companions to the ground. When Saul inquired who it was that had spoken to him, the answer was, "I am Jesus," &c. Here was the Son ; but Jesus had declared that he could do nothing of himself, that is, nothing superhuman ; "but the Father," said he, "doeth the works." Hence the divine work, in this transaction, was that of the Father and the Son acting together as One, precisely as had been the case from the commencement of the creation. Paul recognized the same connection in almost all his letters. And in this manner the Comforter, who is the movement

or action of this complex Being, is still carrying forward and fulfilling the plan of the Almighty until the whole world shall be subdued to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Were this divine scheme once fairly comprehended, it would seem to be the most simple, reasonable, and merciful system that could be devised, perfect and God-like in all its parts. Frail, short-sighted man may indeed raise objections, but God's great and wise plan stands, in its every, even smallest point, just as it existed in the Omniscient mind before He said, "Let there be light." And although all actions, good and evil, were as clearly before Him then as when committed, it must be remembered that when all created objects, man included, came from the Creator's hand, they were pronounced "very good."

And, as the man was delegated to have dominion over all the earthly creation, all thus under his government would naturally be affected by his acts, whether good or evil. When, then, this ruler had done evil, and become himself evil, the effect was felt in his posterity; evil cannot produce good. And not only does his posterity feel the sad effect, but "Cursed be the ground for thy sake," said God to Adam, "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth." That which before brought forth the fruitful tree, now yields the thorn and thistle. Thus the governed, we see, suffer with him who governs, the effect of his evil doing. It was so with David, who in the pride of his heart ordered the number-

ing of the people. In consequence of his sin, seventy thousand of the men of Israel must die. If it be hard to see the justice of this and other similar dealings of God, it is because we cannot see as He sees. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. So with respect to the system of salvation through an atonement. Some call it unjust that an innocent being should suffer because of another's transgression. To the superficial view there may be the appearance of injustice. Let it be considered, however, that the great work of the atonement is one of the parts of this comprehensive, perfect plan of which we are speaking.

The bringing into existence of the "begotten Son," was the preliminary act of God in the creation of all things made known to us. This Son is then taken into perfect union with his Father, and in that union is made, with his Father, Creator and Governor of the universe. Let the reader turn to the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses of the second Psalm, and see what the Father says to the Son on his being brought into existence.

Now in this united capacity they bring into existence another being of the same nature and faculties with the Son before his union with the Father, and life is breathed into this new created being, inhabiting a body of clay previously fashioned for him. The position of the Son when all the works of creation were finished, was this:—He was in a glorified state (John xvii. 5). He was one with his Father, as in all creative, so in all

governmental acts. He had a brother, man, placed on earth, and made ruler of all the earthly creation, having been created in the image of the dual Creator. This brother, man, had a volition as a constituent part of his nature, which he could use for good or for evil, a volition with which God himself could not interfere without a violence both opposed to the very idea of moral government, and casting an imputation on His wisdom in creating a free moral agent, in fact, contradicting and revoking his own work. After due instruction and warning from his Creator, he was enticed, and using his will for evil, found himself, with his sinning companion, in a state of wretched and hopeless spiritual bondage. All this had been taken into account in the plan of Omniscience. Nevertheless this fact in no wise influenced the volition of the brother man. His acts were as free as if no such plan or foresight had ever existed. His conduct being wholly of his own choice, the responsibility rested wholly on himself.

Now comes into view another step in the divine plan : the redemption of man, the Son's brother on earth. And the question suggests itself, May not this have been one, yea even the grand reason why the Son was brought into existence? The Son voluntarily and cheerfully undertakes this great work of man's redemption according to the Father's foreknowledge and will. The fitness of the Son's character for the ordeal through which he was to pass, and the circumstances of the great

transaction, are particularly discussed in the Appendix, to which the reader is referred.

Who can doubt that, were we able to fully apprehend the nature and effect of this redemption, we should see an expression of wisdom, justice, and mercy, such as could come only from Deity. Besides the salvation and happiness of millions of the human family, look at the signal honor, the gratitude and praise which, both in the present life and during the eternal ages, will be given to the Son by reason of his undertaking and accomplishing the redemptive work. "A great multitude whom no man can number, who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," are represented as singing the song whose strains will be prolonged through eternity. Listen: this whole multitude with one loud voice proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and wisdom, and honor, and glory, and blessing." From that time till now this company of redeemed ones has been increasing; and how great will be their number when the happy company shall at last have been completed! And this all, from the redemption wrought by the Son, in accordance with the Father's wondrous plan. Will not this bring to the Son a full reward for all the ignominy and suffering he endured while in the flesh — yea, even in bearing the penalty of the Law that man had disobeyed? Fitting was the apostle's testimony; "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured

the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God."

And now, why should this simple and comprehensible economy of our Heavenly Father be shrouded in such mystical theories as that God performed a part of his works by an eternal Son, and a part by a third person in the Godhead, "persons" that we cannot contemplate without involving a plurality of Gods?

It is easy for one to "look the book through," and then denounce it as "disproving the Deity of our blessed Lord," or "a mild system of Arianism," or "Orthodox Unitarianism," or "Sabellianism," or "Indwelling Scheme," &c. Now, with these, or any other tenets, as such, we have nothing to do. Nor are we careful about "resemblances," outside of the New Testament.

We make no claim to the doctrines herein advanced as our own. Our only claim is, that they are truly the teachings which God has revealed to us by his Son in the Scriptures. Our only aim has been to ascertain what Christ and his inspired apostles intended to teach, and to record that, and that only. Nor do we write simply because *we* believe in them, but because Christ taught them.

Our belief is of no moment to others, but Christ's words are of vital importance to all.

When he calls himself "the Beginning of the creation of God," and his apostles call him "the first-begotten of every creature," the "first-begotten," "God's first-begotten," &c., we believe them ;

and when we find the same sentiment so often and so pointedly expressed in the New Testament, we dare not set our ingenuity at work to compel them to express something different from their intention. Nor can we accept what appear like such attempts from others.

This whole economy is so signally brought out and verified by Jesus and his apostles, that it would seem as if he was aware that doubts, schemes, and erroneous systems would find their way into the Church ; hence he took special pains to guard his people against such devices, by presenting the truth so often, and under so many different aspects, in as simple and plain language as words would admit.

We have no fears in allowing the Scriptures herein quoted, and the doctrines drawn therefrom, to be compared with any writings, ancient or modern, on the same passages, provided it be an unbiassed judgment which is brought to bear in the examination.

SEC. II. — *Certain Views noticed.*

It has long been a question with us, How is it that the doctrines of an eternal Son and of an eternal Trinity have been able to retain their hold in the Church through so many centuries ? The arguments and so-called philosophy used by devout and able men to prove them from the Bible, are matters for painful reflection. We have searched diligently, and, we think, thoroughly, but have found no such

proof in the sacred volume. There are many passages from which a reader may possibly infer them ; and, with these ideas already fixed in his mind, as is the case with too many inquirers after truth, he might regard such passages as proofs, even though conscious of not understanding the doctrines. The first verse of John's gospel, on which we have commented, may be taken as an example. The common deductions from it, as we have seen, amount to just this : that because the Son was with God at the beginning of the creation, he must have been with him in all past eternity. All other arguments for the eternity of the Son, so far as we are acquainted with them, when examined, leave nothing beyond the same inference. Is it singular that we cannot accept such reasoning ? The trouble is, men are too prone to rely on their fellow-men in forming conclusions respecting Christian doctrine. If a subject is a little obscure, the learned betake themselves to the fathers or similar sources, and others to the family commentary, instead of taking the inspired word as the grand source of instruction, and carefully comparing its statements. Is not more time spent in searching for what human teachers in the Church have said on difficult subjects than in pondering the words of Christ and of his apostles with a child-like dependence on Christ's promise of the Comforter, as The Leader " into all truth " ?

Men too often adopt a generally accepted doctrine as an undoubted truth ; and, if they appeal

to the Bible on the subject, it is rather in order to find the proof of the same, than to see whether it is true. How many persons are there who, without prepossessions, go directly to the Word of God to see whether the doctrine of an eternal Son is there taught? Is it not generally assumed that this doctrine is true, and is taught in the Scriptures? We believe that, if one tithe of the time and labor spent to make the Bible prove the doctrine of an eternal Son and an eternal Trinity had been earnestly given to come at the real teachings of Scripture on these points, the Church, centuries ago, would have been freed from the burden of these mysteries.

We are not unaware that we may be charged with setting ourselves up as umpire concerning the teachings of the New Testament on these subjects. Nothing is farther from our design. Simply claiming to search the Scriptures for ourselves, we only ask others to do the same, and to follow what there they find.

The question is agitated, whether there must not have been a capacity of suffering in the divine nature of the Son; as otherwise the penalty of the divine law, it is asserted, could not be fully executed, and several passages of Scripture would not find an adequate meaning, and so a complete and acceptable atonement would fail to be made.

We recoil at once from any such idea. What! God suffer the penalty of his own law, which he gave to a being of his own creating, and wholly for

the benefit of that being ? Why give a law at all, if, when broken, he would bear the penalty ? Would he not thus encourage further transgression ?

Suppose there were in the divine nature such a capacity for suffering, — an idea wholly inadmissible, and at war with all we know of God, — suppose, however, that it could be and were so, would his suffering fulfil the divine law given to man, “ In the day thou eatest thereof *thou* shalt surely die ” ? Could that edict be changed to say, “ In the day thou eatest thereof I will die for you ” ? No : God must change before one jot or tittle of his law can fail. It was given to man for *man* to keep : if he broke it, man must fulfil it ; and to fulfil it is either to obey it wholly and perfectly, or to bear its penalty.

It will be seen how exactly our view of the nature and character of the Son meets the aforesaid inquiry. We see a Son, taken into union with the Father, before the man who received and broke the law was created ; and this Son, of the same nature as the disobedient man, is the one only being who could put himself in a situation to bear the penalty of the law, and redeem his brother. There is no need of assuming in the divine nature a latent capacity of suffering, or of discussing the question as to the reality of such a capacity. In the Son of God, who came down from heaven for this very purpose, we have one exactly fitted to meet the emergency ; and *he did meet it*.

SEC. III. — *Application.*

We close with a few words to our fellow Christians.

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—In this form of address we include all, without reference to any distinctions of name or sect, “who, by the effectual grace of the triune Comforter, have been born into the kingdom of God, and thus made joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ,” — in the name of our common Redeemer we entreat you, in judging of what has now been written, to lay aside all creeds and dogmas which find no support in the teachings of the adored Saviour, or of his inspired apostles. Take the simple Book, as it is given us, with the explanations which are found in itself, and seek the enlightening aid of that Comforter who is the promised Leader into all truth.

Lean not on the authority or ability of man ; as far as possible, let scripture explain scripture. We think we have learned that the sacred writings are their own best commentators.

If, on faithful search and comparison, the reader finds the views herein set forth do not accord with his convictions as to the teachings of our common Lord and Master, of course he will not adopt them. To follow Christ is the only path of safety. But if he finds them to agree with the Inspired Oracles, with himself rests the responsibility as to their acceptance.

APPENDIX.

IN the foregoing treatise there are allusions to the doctrine of the Atonement. The writer has nowhere seen explanations of this doctrine which fully meet his views. In the usual treatment of the subject, certain requirements of the divine moral law seem not to have occurred to the writers.

Suppose that Christ, in his true character as human and divine, had been waylaid by an assassin and murdered ; would his death in that case have made an atonement for sin ?

Or, had he been taken with a fever, such as was common at certain seasons in that country, and died under it, would then his death have made an atonement ?

Again : if by an accident, as by drowning or otherwise, he had lost his life, would this have made an atonement ? The answer, we presume, in all these cases, would be, No.

Or, once more, had he lived to an extreme old

age, and then died as subject to the law of mortality, would such a death have had an atoning efficacy?

Now, we well understand that in the economy of grace, under the divine government, these supposed cases could not happen. But they may, perhaps, serve the purpose of illustration.

Suppose, still further, that, through envy, Christ had been seized by a lawless mob, and carried before the authorities of the land. Bribed witnesses testify that he committed some capital offence, and thus conviction is obtained against him: he is sentenced and executed. Would his death in that case avail as an atonement for the sins of mankind? Should the answer be, "Yes," the inquiry arises, What is the difference, in the nature or bearing of the loss of his life in this case, and in that of its being taken by an assassin? In both instances his life is taken by malice. But should the answer be "No," then it may be asked, What difference is there, as to the nature and bearing of the case, between the supposed transaction and that which actually took place in the apprehension, conviction, and crucifixion of Jesus? In both, the acts would be legal according to the laws of the land, but unjust because the conviction was on false evidence. Instances often occur now in our courts, where the evidence is such as to convict a party of guilt when perfectly innocent. The particulars, as published in the papers of the day, are within the memory of

many among us, concerning a person in a neighboring State, who was tried for murder, convicted, and sentenced. While awaiting the day of his execution, to the surprise of all, the supposed murdered man appeared, alive and well. Having heard, in another State, of the facts in the case, he immediately hastened to the relief of his former neighbor. Now, this man had been legally convicted, and would have been legally, yet most unjustly, executed, the evidence being false on which he was pronounced guilty.

Now, in the nature, intent, and bearing of the trial of Christ, the evidence being perverted by the Jewish Council, and false at Pilate's judgment-seat, is not the case quite similar to that just mentioned? The evidence was false in both cases; the convictions, if legal, were unjust, because founded on false evidence. Could the fact, simply, of Christ's submitting to such conviction and execution, be regarded as answering the demands of the divine moral law?

After the subjugation of the Jews by the Romans, the authority of the Jewish Sanhedrim was recognized in all cases except capital offences, which must be carried to the Roman authorities. Blasphemy, according to the Mosaic moral law, was a capital offence, punishable by the criminal being stoned. (Lev. xxiv. 16.) Jesus, therefore, having been condemned for blasphemy, would have been stoned, had the Jews possessed the power. In that case, certain prophecies would not have

been fulfilled ; as, "They shall look on him whom they *pierced*," and also, "They *pierced* my hands and my feet."

The Council assumed that if a man claimed to be God, or made himself equal with God, it was blasphemy. When, therefore, Jesus, on oath, admitted that he was "the Christ, the Son of God" (a truth which has been the joy and rejoicing of millions), they, taking him to be but man, pronounced it blasphemy, and consequently passed upon him the sentence of death. Having no power to execute the sentence, however, they take him to the Roman authorities, and charge him with a political crime, that of treasonable utterance against the government, and by mob acclamation, and an indirect threat to accuse Pilate as disloyal to Cæsar, they obtain the sentence for crucifixion. Although this sentence was ostensibly legal, yet a more unjust and malicious act, especially on the part of the Jews, history does not record.

Now, what bearing could such an unrighteous, earthly transaction have towards answering the demands of a divine moral law? How could the effect be a fulfilling of the law of God, any more than if the life of Christ had been taken by accident or assassination?

It is evident from the teachings of Christ and the apostles, that the original sentence, "Thou shalt surely die," applied to the whole man. It did not refer simply to the separation of soul and

body, and the extinction of animal life, but included the state or condition of soul and body both before and after their separation.

The body was to return to the ground whence it was taken ; the soul, which can never decay, or, literally, die, was to pass into a state or condition which would be the natural result of a non-compliance with the directions given to our first parents. This condition, being a spiritual condition, cannot be presented to the senses as can that of the body. It is set before us, by Jesus and the apostles, by emblems and figures ; earthly things and states being employed to represent the spiritual state. Thus it is called a state of bondage. "He that committeth sin," said Jesus, "is the servant (or bondman) of sin." No one doubts that Eve and her companion committed sin in disregarding their Creator's directions. In so doing they came into *bondage*, as the consequence of sin.

It is also called a state of condemnation. Paul says (Rom. v. 10), "As by one" (all agree he here refers to Adam), "judgment came upon all men to condemnation," &c.

And also as a state of death, in contrast with another state called eternal life. Paul says (Rom. vi. 23), "The wages of sin is death ;" that is, the result of sin is death.

Many other figures and emblems are used in Scripture to represent this state of the soul under the effect of disobedience, which need not be here mentioned.

The first parents, therefore, having sinned, found themselves in this state of spiritual bondage, including alienation from their Father ; and this at once manifested itself in their disinclination to hear or see him. On hearing his voice, they fled, and hid themselves, which plainly showed their estrangement from him.

Now, it is an unquestionable fact that this state of the soul towards God is lineally and legitimately transmitted to the posterity of Adam down to the latest generation. This view is unacceptable, we are aware, to very many ; but we see not how, legally or logically, it can be otherwise. Nature and observation on every hand attest the fact of a universally inherited opposition to God. "Likeness begets likeness the world over."

But it is not now our intention to enter into argument on this point. We are to consider, rather, the provision which our heavenly Father, in connection with his Son, has made, that man may be redeemed from this bondage or condemnation. It is the general understanding of those who call themselves orthodox, that redemption is in Christ. If the question be asked, How is redemption in him ? the usual answer is, "He died to redeem us. His death offered an acceptable satisfaction to divine justice. We are redeemed through repentance and faith in him." These general affirmations unquestionably express Scripture doctrine. Paul is very clear and decisive in declaring the same. Peter and John give similar

testimony, the teaching of the Apocalypse being to the same effect.

But as the divine edict is of a spiritual as well as physical character, it becomes needful that its fulfilment be likewise of a twofold character ; and as the moral character of the first pair had become dissimilar to that of their Creator, and was assimilated to an adverse being and government, they had neither the inclination nor power to comply with the divine directions, or to redeem themselves and return to their former allegiance. What their inclination was has been already noticed : the power to reinstate themselves they had lost, like all criminals, who, from the fact of their having broken the law, at once lose the power to repair the breach in any other way than to endure what the law requires.

We will pass, then, to consider in what way Jesus not only fulfilled the divine mandate externally, but also in all its spiritual demands.

It will be remembered that Jesus, on a certain occasion, speaking of his life, said, " No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again " (John x. 18.) Here Jesus asserts that no man took his life ; and if we examine the circumstances attending his death, we shall see that this declaration was literally true.

On that memorable evening, the fifteenth of Nisan, after Jesus, with the eleven, had withdrawn, probably late, to the garden, all around was quiet

under nature's repose. The distant rumbling of the city on the other side of Cedron had died away. And now an extraordinary oppression came upon the soul of Jesus, to such a degree that he felt the need of special assistance from his Father. Taking the three disciples whom he usually selected as witnesses on special occasions, he led them a little distance from the rest, and bade them watch while he went a little farther and prayed. He then went forward, fell on his face, and cried, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." But no answer is returned; there is no mitigation of the pressure, which increases until his agony is such that sweat rolls down his face; this mental distress increases until blood issues through the pores of the skin, and, mingling with the sweat, falls to the ground. "My soul," he exclaims, "is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

Now, what, we ask, was the cause of this extreme agony of the Saviour's soul?

Some would reply, that it was experienced in view of the terrible suffering of the approaching crucifixion. But does history speak of another instance of such suffering in view only of death, however terrible in its nature? Multitudes of his followers, we well know, have met death in the most fearful forms with composure, and even with rejoicing. Are we to suppose that He who could support countless numbers of the faithful in suffering all kinds of torture and cruel deaths that the

emissaries of Satan could devise, should himself be under such mental anguish as to cause the blood to ooze from his flesh simply at the prospect of passing through the pains of the cross to his native home and glory? Such an idea seems preposterous.

Was not this experience of anguish that "baptism" of which he spoke: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" What baptism could he have referred to in these words but that terrible scene through which he passed in the garden and on the cross?

Mark his words. "My *soul* is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" that is, at the point of death, or just ready to die. The bloody sweat shows the depth of that agony; doubtless, had it been a little more severe, or of longer continuance, it must have caused his death. But just at this point an angel came from "heaven strengthening him," lest he should sink and die on the spot under the heavy burden then pressing upon his soul.

How wonderful and timely was this interposition! It brings to mind the instance of Abraham, when about to offer up Isaac, his son, at the divine command. At the moment when his arm was lifted for the fatal stroke, an angel appears and stays the deed, and the life of his beloved son is spared. So, on this occasion, with Jesus; and who can peruse the account without emotions of gratitude to the all-wise Ruler of events? Suppose the angel had

not appeared, and that Jesus had there expired. We should not, indeed, dare to say that such a death of Christ would not have availed for an atonement; but what a chasm there would have been in the providential history of Christ's death; how incomplete in many of its very important parts! What would become of those prophecies of Scripture, those sacrifices, yea, the very declarations of Christ himself, which pointed to a different manner of death? In that case, too, what evidence would have been given as to the *cause* of his death? whereas, in the actual circumstances of it there was, emphatically, such evidence; as will presently be considered.

And, further, ground would have been given to the Jews for their assertion that Jesus was a deceiver; they could have said that God had smitten him on account of his deception; and who could have answered them? Furthermore, many proofs of his divinity would have been wanting. Nor could any of those events have occurred, such as his betrayal, arrest, trial, conviction, and execution, with the attendant circumstances; all so full of interest, and interwoven, as now they are, in the development of the scheme of salvation. Jesus himself, having declared the manner of his death, and many of the particulars attending it, would have been proved a false prophet. All must see the vast importance of his being supernaturally sustained in his conflict in the garden.

Now let us look at those circumstances which

were actually and immediately connected with the death of our Saviour. Jesus was transfixed to the cross at nine o'clock in the morning. From twelve o'clock darkness was spread over the earth till three in the afternoon. At that momentous and memorable hour the pressure upon the soul of Jesus was such as to force from his lips that heart-rending appeal to his Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and commending his spirit into the hands of his Father, uttered the weighty exclamation, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost.

It will be observed that Jesus had been on the cross six hours only when he died. John (Bib. Archæology, p. 325) states that criminals, when crucified, commonly live until the third day, and sometimes to the seventh. Another writer remarks, "The degree of anguish is gradual in the increase. The person would languish gradually from excessive pains, exposure, and want of nourishment; the vitality of the system gently failing. The voice becomes husky, and eventually fails a longer or shorter time before life is extinct."

Compare with this the circumstances of Jesus' death. Matthew, Mark, and Luke state that he cried with a *loud* voice, and gave up the ghost. John says, "When he had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." As the other evangelists relate that he cried with a loud voice, it is more than probable the words "It is finished" were the words

thus spoken. Two facts unite, then, to show that something beside the pains of crucifixion caused the death of Jesus. First, that his death was premature, taking place in six hours. Second, that he had full strength when he gave up the ghost. Mark says (xv. 39), "When the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this was the son of God!" The centurion noted the facts, as being uncommon in such executions, and Matthew observes, "He and they who were with him feared greatly."

Again : when Joseph sought from Pilate the body of Jesus, Pilate " marvelled if he were *already* dead," and refused to deliver up the body until he was assured from the centurion that he had been a while dead ; which gives additional evidence that the death was premature.

In Christ's time, the Jews had many privileges relating especially to their religious services and divine law. One was in regard to a criminal Jew who had been hanged. Deut. xxi. 23 : " His body shall not remain all night upon the tree." In deference to this law, the Jews, when one of their countrymen had been crucified, were allowed to hasten death, that the body might be taken down before sunset. Among the means used was the breaking of the person's bones against the cross with an instrument ; first below the elbows and knees, and then above them. If this did not succeed, the body was pierced with a spear.

The crucifixion of our Lord was on Friday. The next day was the Jewish Sabbath, commencing at sunset, or six o'clock P. M., that same day ; and that being the Passover Sabbath, it was, as John says, "a high day."

Towards the latter part of the afternoon (for Jesus died at three o'clock), the Jews applied to the governor that the usual means might be used to effect the death of the criminals, that the bodies might not remain on the cross on their Sabbath.

The request was granted. The guard, being arranged around the criminals, came first to the two outer ones, and these being alive, they broke their limbs. Then coming to Jesus, in the centre, they find him dead. There was no necessity, then, that his limbs should be broken ; but to make sure of the fact that he was dead, the spearman pierced his body ; and there being no action, it was evident that he was dead. Thus additional confirmation is given of the premature death of Christ.

Now, looking at all these facts attending the death of Jesus, the conclusion seems irresistible that his death was not the result of the crucifixion.

Both Jews and Romans intended his death, and did what must eventually have caused it ; but the actual executioner seems to have been something other than the cross. This agrees with Jesus' declaration that no man took his life.

What, then, did take that life ? True, Jesus said, "The Son of Man should be delivered into the hands of men, and they should *kill him*."

Peter charges the Jews with having "killed the Prince of Life." Virtually, the deed was theirs, though the Romans performed the act ; and both Jews and Romans believed they had accomplished their purpose.

We have noticed the mental anguish of Christ in the garden, when there was no outward cause to produce it ; we have also viewed him on the cross, under such suffering as to call forth that affecting cry, " My God, my God," &c. This appeal seems to have been a continuation of the supplications in Gethsemane, and indicates that the suffering on the cross was, in its most essential part, of a similar character to that borne in the garden. In the one instance the language of the sufferer was, " If it be possible let this cup pass from me : but not as I will, but as thou wilt ;" and as the burden grew insupportable, he was strengthened by a celestial hand. But now, on the cross, the cup returns to the Saviour with all the oppressiveness experienced in the garden.

If a person be under a broken law (not now considering by what means he comes into that position, which will be an after consideration), and the demand of that law for that violation be death, then the person must endure that which involves death. The law cannot be fulfilled in anything less. If the law be external, recognizing the outward actions of men, then the requirement will be external. If spiritual, that is, the non-conformity attaching to a spiritual law, then the requirement is spiritual,

applying to the inward man. Now, this was precisely the case with Jesus. He was under both this spiritual and external divine demand. To fulfil it he must receive mental suffering to such an extent as to take animal life. This, we understand, was the suffering of Jesus, both in the garden and on the cross. In the garden, its intensity was sufficiently shown by the strongest word being used that the language contains — “being in an *agony*.” “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.” (Lam. i. 12.) His life was saved in the garden, but on the cross there could be no such salvation.

To ask now that the cup might be removed would be unavailing. No angel may now be sent to strengthen him. The hour has come when he must drink to the dregs the cup which his Father had given him. There can be no mitigation now, since for this cause came he to this hour. Even his Father must leave him to “tread the wine-press alone.” Already had he been cast out of the church militant, for when the council pronounced him “guilty of death,” that sentence excluded him from the Mosaic church militant. According to the precepts of that church, the only visible and divinely recognized church then on earth, — it will be remembered the Christian church was now in embryo, — he at once came into the situation of an

outlaw, deemed fit only to be stoned to death, as a warning against blasphemy. Nor was this all. No, nor was all we have said of his sufferings equal, in our view, to what we are now about to state. In his present situation, he must not only be cut off from membership with the church militant, but as a man, he must, for the time being, be cast off by the Father from the kingdom of God!! For such an execution *in* the kingdom of God would defile it.

"Never," exclaims the lover of Jesus, "never can I admit that the spotless Lamb of God could be cast out of God's spiritual kingdom!" Be not startled, dear reader; remember that whatever Jesus did, and whatever was done to him, while here on earth, will redound to his everlasting glory, and the highest good of Zion.

Paul says (Gal. iv. 4, 5), "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made *under the law*, to redeem them that are under the law." Now, this Son must, in some sense, be in a similar state with those whom he came forth to redeem; and he could not be in the same state with them as a transgressor, for he never transgressed. Was not this that *lineal spiritual bondage*, which he, in common with them, inherited by having been "born of a woman."

Jesus, therefore, was not under the law as a transgressor, but by being born of a woman, "*born under the law*;" and how does this fact bring him under the law unless the woman was under the

law? and how would this woman be under the law, if she had not been born of a woman also under the law? and so on from generation to generation, back to the first woman? and when was the time, from Eve down to the birth of Christ, when the woman was released from this bondage? This leads us to speak more particularly on the lineal descent of bondage; and it must be kept in view that it is essentially spiritual bondage of which we treat. This state is represented by different terms both in Scripture and various writers. It is called condemnation, spiritual death, penalty of the law, &c. It is a state of the soul indescribable except by emblem. We will use the expression "bondage" as virtually including the others.

By the divine economy, the descent of bondage was established in the mother, and not in the father. Why this was so we cannot explain, unless in this arrangement there was a view to the future Messiah. But so it was. There was no descent of bondage from the father.

The bond father could have a free child of a free woman, but a free father could not have a free child of a bond woman. This was evidently the divine order. (See Ex. xxi. 1-4.) And so far as we know, this has been the practice of all nations since. The owner of the bond woman was the owner of her children, whoever might be their father. If a wife had a bond maid, and that maid had children, the wife had unlimited control over them, above that of her husband, even if he was their father.

This seems singular, especially in the patriarchal age, when the wife was under such subjection and control of the husband, as shown in the case of the wife's vow. (See Num. xxx. 6-13, inclusive.)

The cases of Abraham and Jacob exemplify this, especially that of Abraham. The children of their bond maids were the children of their free wives : they owned them, and could surrender them to their husbands, or do what else they pleased with them, irrespective of their husbands' authority. In Jacob's case, from the tenor of the narrative, it is probable Leah and Rachel did not use their power contrary to Jacob's will ; or they gave those children to him at their birth as their own children. But it was not so with Sarah and Abraham. She retained her authority over her bond maid and her child, even above her husband, although he was father of the child. But this son, who had been dandled upon the knees of an affectionate and loving father, at Sarah's command must be torn from his bosom, and from a home of plenty ; must be sent away, he knew not whither, with sustenance only for a few days. And why must he be thus abandoned ? Only because he was born of a bond woman. Even the pious and affectionate father could not protect him from the orders of his owner. However unnatural, cruel, and unjust this may appear to us, the act was approved by God, and the principle afterwards recorded in the divine statutes. In the circumstance of Ishmael, we see not only an emblem,

but also an explanation of the peculiar position of Jesus in the great plan of the atonement, and they teach us how he came into that position. According to this economy, — and we must see it is God's, and not man's, — Eve being in spiritual bondage for disobedience, her children must be in the same state ; and they could not change their condition, however many generations might follow : therefore, in the Son's coming into the world by being born of one of the daughters of Eve, he becomes a bond man under the law. This, it will be seen, accords with Paul's words, "Made of a woman, made under the law." As soon as he is born of a woman he becomes one of the family of man, a child of Eve, under the law ; and the law now requires of him a complete fulfilment, not only in all the outward acts of life, but in the intentions of the heart. This he must do as one of the human race.

Now, had he in any one instance violated the law, in thought, word, or deed, it would have been ratifying his original parents' transgression, and consequently have placed himself precisely in their position. He would be, as they were, helpless as to making any restitution. But he kept the law, not only in outward life, but in spirit. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," said the blessed Jesus. All this was his duty to do as a man ; this purchased nothing ; it only enabled him to retain his place in his Father's love. It could have no effect on his inherited bondage. He was

a bond man still, and his freedom could only be obtained by the price of that freedom, and the edict determines that price. "In the day thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die*." Now, call this announcement what you will, penalty of the law, punishment, or whatever else (it is the result of transgression and arises from a consciousness of being cast off by God, the intensity of the affliction being in proportion to the clearness of that consciousness, — Jesus did not say, "My God, my God, why art thou punishing me?" but, "Why hast thou *forsaken* me?"), it must be of such a nature as to cause death; nothing short of this could fulfil that divine announcement; and there had not been a human being on earth, from Adam down to the advent of Jesus, who could redeem himself. All, having been born under the same edict, had lost the power of recovery. Now, let us look at the capacity in which Jesus stood, and his adaptedness to meet this emergency. We will look at this whole transaction in a business-like view, without reference now to the eternal government of the All-wise Deity. As a perfect human being, Jesus was with his Father before the foundation of the world. By and through him his Father performed all wonders of creation; through him the directions and the warning were given to his brother-man. After the transgression, before the interview in the garden, it was understood between him and his Father that he should go down and be a descendant of his brother and his companion Eve, and, as

such, would take upon himself the result of their transgression ; thus opening a way for their return to his and his Father's affections. But it must be left to his brother's volition whether he would return or not. He used his own will to go away, and he must use it to return. This way for his return was preached to him, as some suppose, at the first interview after the transgression in the garden, in the slaying and sacrificing of animals, and in the skins clothing their bodies. Thus was emblemized that through the death of the coming Messiah, their naked souls could be clothed with robes made white by being washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Thus the Creator continues his dealings with the descendants of the first mother until the fullness of time had come. And now a body is to be prepared for the reception of this Son ; and as it was necessary that the animal life and body should be holy, he must be begotten by the Holy Ghost : thus "that holy thing" that should be born of her might truly be called "the Son of God."

In a word, when on the cross Jesus exclaimed, "It is finished," and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost, the fulfilment of the law was complete. That great event had come to which all sacrifices had pointed, from that of Abel down to the last paschal lamb that Jesus and his disciples ate in the furnished upper room.

He had now fulfilled the law in all its claims on him as a man and descendant of Eve. That soul

and body which were joined in Bethlehem death has separated. They had kept the law together, but they must be separated on the fulfilment, or there is no death; and if no death, then no fulfilment of the law. The soul, having always acted with his Father, could now soar away with attendant angels to the celestial Paradise; as Christ said to his companion on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The body lies a helpless form in Joseph's tomb, naturally as much a subject of decay as that of Lazarus. Behold the two then thus separated; the soul in Paradise, the body in the tomb.

Let the reader here observe, just at this point comes in the sublime and necessary union of this human soul, or son with his Father, in order to complete the scheme of redemption. Of himself alone he could do nothing, as he said. As a man he could no more return to earth and reunite himself to the body than could any other man; but being one with his Father, he had "all power in heaven and in earth." He could thus re-enter and restore that body to life, after it had lain in the tomb until the third day, as easily as he could resuscitate Lazarus when he had been dead four days.

On one occasion, speaking to his disciples of his death, he says, "They shall crucify him, and the third day he shall rise again," implying that in his Father he had power to rise. At another time he says, "He must be killed, and raised up again the

third day," implying that he would *be raised* by a supernatural power ; and the apostles almost invariably ascribe his resurrection to God. Here we have similar language to that used in reference to the creation, where it is said, "God created," and again, "Christ created ;" and here, "God raised him," and "Christ arose," showing that as they were one in the creation, so were they one in the resurrection.

The soul of Christ then returned to the world, accompanied by an angel who rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. He re-entered the body, gave it life, and there in the tomb transformed it into a spiritual body. Of course this spiritual body could not retain the linen clothes and napkin, any more than Elijah's body could retain the mantle when that body was transformed to prepare it for heaven. In our view, Jesus arose with a spiritual body ; at his pleasure he reassumed and laid aside the natural body. When the material body was assumed, it was in all respects the same as it was at the crucifixion, and consequently visible to the natural sight. When in a spiritual state it was invisible. This accounts for his marvellous appearance on several occasions, and as marvellous disappearance. We see no more difficulty in this view concerning the resurrection body of Jesus, than that angels were occasionally clothed with assumed material bodies. The angel who rolled away the stone certainly had a material body, or the women and keepers could not have seen him. Those who

ate with Abraham surely had material bodies, for they were seen, and acted like men ; and could not Jesus reassume his former body as easily as to clothe these spirit angels with new material bodies ? Now, as that body had never been used in transgression, and as Jesus had purchased a deliverance from the inherited bondage, the soul, by divine power, having reinstated and reanimated the body, this with the soul now stood free. Body and soul could soar away to heaven, and Jesus could sit down at the right hand of God where Stephen afterwards beheld him.

Let us now consider what a personage it required to fulfil that broken injunction in Eden.

First, he must be a being under the law. Then he must be of the family of man ; for to no other race of beings were the directions given. Also, he must suffer the penalty announced, or the demand would not be fulfilled. Again, it must be one on whom the *consequence of the offence legally* rests. Then he must on no occasion have acted contrary to the divine will ; one such act would incapacitate him for such a position. Further, he must possess divine power to return to earth, reanimate the body, transform it into a spiritual body, and as one who is absolutely a perfectly free person, return to his native heaven. Lastly, he must be Deity, for the fulfilment of the law must be infinite.

Where, now, can the personage be found in whom all these qualifications are combined ? Nowhere in heaven or earth, save in *Jesus of Naza-*

reth, the Son of man and the Son of God. "There is no name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved" but the name of Jesus. Let infinite wisdom and mercy be adored! Let the reader now particularly mark: as this very Son who fulfilled the law's demand by suffering on the cross was the first human being who ever existed, and was so united to or incorporated with his Father as to make the two One, so that they were together in the creation, in which the forming of man was the crowning act, the man on earth was thus his creature, or son, as well as his brother. He, therefore, was properly the Representative of this brother and his posterity. Further, as this God-man in his capacity as Creator, divine and human Governor, having come under the law by "being born of a woman," the demands of that law were laid upon him. And who could release him? The law could not be abrogated. "But," says one, "the mercy of God surely is sufficient to pardon his own Son." Nay, we reply, for in that case he must annul the edict made in the garden; but "not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail till all be fulfilled." Christ as God and man having met this demand, deliverance becomes applicable to all the descendants of that erring pair who have never voluntarily sinned. For this cause came he into the world, not for himself, but "to save the lost." No necessity existed of his coming under the penalty on his own account; he was happy with his

Father. Literally he was "made under the law that he might redeem those under the law."

The infant child is indeed born into the world in a state of spiritual bondage, since born of a bond mother, as also Jesus came into bondage. But the soul of Jesus having come from heaven in union with his Father, God being also the Father of his body, he could not be an unholy thing, like the children of both alienated and bond parents. Nothing whatever of an evil nature could attach itself to Jesus as he himself said, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me."

Before the infant is conscious of right and wrong, if that unhallowed nature should be acted out, this does not affect its position : for it insensibly possesses that inherited alienation ; consequently it comes under the same freedom as those who are in bondage only by birth.

But it must not be forgotten that this freedom is the purchase of the Son of God ; the redemption is in Him and not in the child. "But," says one, "why could not this innocent one fulfil the divine requirement as well as the innocent Jesus, who was born under the same bondage ?"

Because with its bondage it inherited from its parents an alienated, corrupt nature, which would disqualify it from offering a pure sacrifice to God — a nature which Jesus did not possess. But admitting that the child came into the world as pure as the babe of Bethlehem ; if the price of freedom should be laid on him as it was on Jesus on the

cross, he could indeed in a sense meet it, but it would be, so far as the efficacy is concerned, as when the murderer by his death fulfils the law of his country: the law, indeed, has no further demand on him, but it leaves him a dead man, with no power to return. Besides, the demand would be answered for himself only; and where would be the power or authority to purchase freedom for others?

The sum of our subject is, that all the descendants of Eve are born in legitimate spiritual bondage and alienation, and as unable to redeem themselves as Ishmael, or any other bond man; and that it requires just such a character and personage as the Lord Jesus Christ to effect a Redemption; and that he died on the cross, on Calvary, to consummate that redemption, in the first place for all such descendants of Eve as are born into the world, and leave it without voluntary transgression.

As this redemption was the purchase of *Jesus*, such are under obligation to him for their freedom: hence they all will be prepared to heartily unite with the celestial choir in singing, "Thou wast *slain*, and hast *redeemed us* to God by thy blood." It may be asked, What proof is there for believing that the death of Jesus had such a bearing on the salvation of these?

In the Mosaic ceremonial law, where Christ is represented in so many different capacities and relations to the church by different sacrifices and emblems, we find (Lev. v. 17-19) a provision for

those who transgress unknowingly (and we see they were recognized as guilty, although morally they could not be so reckoned); and they were forgiven, or set free, by *offering a sacrifice*.

Why this sacrifice, if it did not refer to the great Sacrifice on Calvary?

Now, as he who transgresses ignorantly cannot be reckoned guilty as one who transgresses wilfully, it places him on a level with him who never transgresses, as to personal guilt. In that case the unintentional transgressor and the non-transgressor come under the same principle; and being with all others, under the inherited bondage, are made free by the purchase of Christ. Thus we see our heavenly Father has made complete provision for all those descendants of Eve who never committed sin, or who transgressed unknowingly.

But this does not reach the case of him who knowingly and voluntarily sins. All must see that even in one such act he places himself virtually in the position of the first transgressor; and if God be true, he must be treated accordingly. There is no mitigation. There was none for Adam and Eve. As soon as they committed the act, they were doomed to the consequences.

The voluntary transgressor by such act takes himself out of the position he held in common with the unknown transgressor and the innocent, and assumes the prerogative to decide for himself whether these divine commands shall be obeyed or not; and possessing the inherited alienation to the

divine character and government, he, as well as the original Mother and Father, voluntarily renounces the will of his Creator, and follows his own, which, contrary to the admonitions of his conscience, leads him into transgression.

As to the results of the offence, they may be more or less immediate. In fact, we may say the consequences of transgression are seldom rightly apprehended by the doer until the mind is illuminated by the Comforter. When the offender rightly views the wrong, its nature and the consequences, he instinctively disapproves of it, and regrets that he has been an actor therein. If he is sincere and hearty in this contrition that he not only acted wrong in disregarding his heavenly Father's directions, but that he had a disposition so to do, he will condemn himself for having indulged in such motives. The measure of his contrition will be in proportion to his perception of that disposition, the act, and the results. Now, if the man is really contrite (it is not material as to the degree), it will be seen that he is morally a changed man. He disapproves of every feeling and act contrary to the divine will. He now takes sides with Jesus and his Father. Now he is a suitable subject to come under the freedom purchased by Christ ; and as those acts of disobedience were the offspring of that inherited alienation, and as the man voluntarily condemns them, they also can be reckoned with the nature of the man.

But could his tears of contrition release him from the sentence, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"? "The soul that sinneth it shall die." We have seen that he has placed himself in the position of the first pair. Could repentance, however sincere, redeem them from under that sentence? Does the repentance of a criminal redeem him from the sentence of the law?

Thus the man sees himself condemned. He has broken the positive command of his almighty Creator, and is powerless to make any amends. He can use the words of the jailer at Philippi, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Just at this point he can hear Jesus saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

As the man has already been a stranger to Jesus, he may ask, "Who art thou, that canst give such a kind invitation?" It would be answered, "I am Jesus, your Brother. I am one with the eternal God. I was one with my Father in creating the world, in creating your original father, placing him in that beautiful garden, with everything that was needful for him and his companion. We gave him a volition as a rational and moral being, and we knew, if he had the power to use his volition for good, he could use it for evil. Hence we threw around him all the influence we could, in order to induce him to use it for his best good. And to further prevent his making a bad use of his privi-

lege, we selected two trees, prominent in the garden. We named one the Tree of Life, and the other the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We said, 'Behold these trees; they are emblems of what their names bespeak. There is the Tree of Life. So long as you live in fellowship and harmony with us, following strictly our directions, you shall eat of that tree, for you are heirs of eternal life. The other, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, is also an emblem of what its name would indicate — knowledge of good and evil. You know 'good;' be content with that, for if you aspire also after knowledge of evil, you will surely die, for in your purity you cannot know evil without experiencing it.

"But, notwithstanding all our precautions, your first parents were enticed; they sought the forbidden thing, and obtained the knowledge of evil. Of necessity, we could not associate with evil, and were compelled to cast them off, and prohibit them from further access to the Tree of Life. Thus the original pair fell under the sentence announced to them in the garden, and only awaited its execution. And as all their posterity would be born under the same bondage, it was arranged between my Father and myself that I should be born of one of their children, and inherit thus, with them, their state of bondage, that I, a bond man, might legally fulfil that sentence in their behalf. 'When the fullness of time was come,' my Father sent me, as we had mutually agreed. I went forth and met the require-

ment of the fatal sentence on Calvary. It was severe in the extreme, but the severest of all was, to be forsaken of my dearest Father. I had not till then known the pangs of the soul under the consciousness of being forsaken of God. My Father could not in any form assist me, nor even sympathize with me in my then condition. I was now fulfilling that sentence of ours, 'Thou shalt surely die;' and while in that state, He could not only show no sympathy, but could not allow me as a man to have place in His kingdom. No; however much he loved me,* "he must cast me off; for the nature of that kingdom was such that it could not admit of an execution within its holy province: that would mar its purity. Although I never committed an offence, yet having been 'made of a woman, made under the law,' I must be considered in bondage, in the eye of that law, until I had met its demands. In that *crisis*, I could receive no help nor sympathy from my Father.

"Thus I was left to 'tread the wine-press alone.' In me the sentence was fulfilled in its letter and its spirit. I was under the effect of that inexorable edict whose sentence was death. I died under it; having, as man, no power of help for myself: for

* Abraham loved his son no less when he stretched forth his hand to slay him than at other times. So the Father's love for Jesus, his only-begotten son, was no less when He was obliged to forsake him than when He was with him in the creation.

while the divine sentence was being executed on me as the son of man, of necessity it rendered me powerless in regard to myself. But when death had ensued, the penalty was accomplished. The law was fulfilled. I was as free from bondage as I was before I came "under the law" by being "born of a woman." I could now exercise the power I had of my Father both in heaven and earth. I could descend to earth, re-animate and re-enter that body, and set all its functions in operation again; could walk about on the earth, could talk and act in all respects as before I passed through that ordeal on the cross.

"And now, my much-loved brother-man, I offer all to you. You see you have no power to redeem yourself. No other being in the universe, besides myself, can do this. I invite, I entreat you then, brother-man, to accept freedom at a Brother's hands. My Father has authorized me to extend this invitation to one and all; and if accepted, to bestow the boon of redemption and fellowship with US. To accept this must be a voluntary act; each individual must act for himself."

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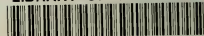


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